

W. Ashwell
Leyden House
FEATURES FROM LIFE;

OR,

A SUMMER VISIT.

PRICE SIX SHILLINGS SEWED.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

FEATURES FROM LIFE

OF

A SUMMER VISIT

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[Bound at Stationers' Hall]



Anna Arnold

To Mrs. HASTINGS.

Madam,

WITH splendor and elegance of taste we connect the idea of a lively imagination and a sensible heart; it is to these last qualities I apply when I solicit the honor of your patronage for these volumes. The weaknesses and sufferings of the leading characters they exhibit, appear to me to rise naturally out of dispositions replete with great virtues, and extreme tenderness; their misfortunes above all others the most likely to make a deep and eternal impression on minds of fine-

fine-wrought sensibility. If this little work should meet with your approbation, I shall receive much pleasure, and feel my self-love greatly flattered.

I have the honor to be,

Madam,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

The AUTHOR.



FEATURES FROM LIFE;

OR,

A SUMMER VISIT.

CHAP. I.

“ **H**OW charmingly the thunder
“ storm has cleared the air and allayed
“ the extreme heat; and see how beau-
“ tifully the soft rays of the setting sun
“ gleam upon that little statue!” said
Matilda to Mr. Conway, as they entered
their elegant little saloon; “ Do not
“ direct my attention,” returned he

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to

“to that object, lest it should tempt me
“to an act of imprudence. I had a let-
“ter to day from my friend Lewis, who
“informs me that the original, from
“which this cast was taken, is to be
“sold for only three hundred Guineas.”
“Would that fate,” cried Matilda,
“would exchange our hundreds for as
“many thousands a year, that it might
“not be imprudent in us to think the
“sum you mention a trifle.”

“Heavens! my good girl, you do
“not think that I had a serious thought
“about the matter? I know it is a
“thing impracticable: I spoke but in
“jest : I hope, nay, I trust, I have en-
“tirely lost the desire of throwing away
“money in purchasing things of no
“real utility.” “I wish,” replied Matilda,
“with



with a look of animated sweetness that
went to the heart, "that it was in your
power to throw away money, as you
call it; for I am sure there is no one
who would dispense superfluous cash
more laudably, or after more elegant
acquisitions."

"O! you simple girl, you must not
thus flatter such a favourite propen-
sity, unless you had the means of gra-
tifying it; for you may increase it to a
fault; and in our present circum-
stances you should rather bid me to
conquer it."

"Alas!" said Matilda, "it is not in
my power to reserve"—

"I know it is not;" interrupted he, "but

“do not, Matilda, think me so absolute
“a cognoscenti as to be seriously hurt at
“this affair. Could you believe, that
“even if you had by an admirable œco-
“nomy saved something from the sum
“appropriated to family expences, that
“I would accept it towards gratifying a
“whim of mine ; Oh no.”

“You interrupted me before you had
“heard me out, Conway,” said she.
“Now if you have ended, permit me to
“finish what I begun to say.—I observ-
“ed it was not in my power to reserve,
“and I was going to add the monosyl-
“lable *much*, if you had suffered me
“to proceed. I have, however, at this
“time, the sum you want, and it is en-
“tirely at your service.”

“And

“ And have you, indeed, done this; and
 “ yet, without the appearance of re-
 “ retrenching in the smallest article? I
 “ did not think, when you several times
 “ wanted me to hear about an overplus
 “ of cash in your hands, from the man-
 “ ner in which our table is supplied, that
 “ the charming mistress who graced it
 “ could have such a sum in bank.”

“ Yes, yes, I have; and I beg you to
 “ take it without saying any thing more
 “ on the subject.”

“ Oh! no, I cannot accept of it :
 “ expend it yourself; you may find a
 “ thousand purposes for it : make an ad-
 “ dition to your jewels; that is the only
 “ sort of finery you like.”

“ It is true,” said she ; “ but be assured I shall not purchase any with this sum ; so, I beg you will not think of refusing to make use of it.”

“ I cannot help observing how strangely it happens that you should have laid up just the value of my little favourite. But was it really the three hundred Guineas ?——within twenty or thirty pounds”——

“ Extraordinary ! but you surely could not think I would accept of it to spend myself, unless indeed you have as particular a wish to make the purchase as I have ? I know no one who has a better taste than yourself : but I do not recollect your ever expressing any strong marks of admiration

“ tion

“tion of this statue. If you had any
“peculiar desire yourself, the thing
“would be quite different.”

“But, I have as great a wish to make
“the purchase as you have: and so be
“content on that head,” said Matilda,
starting from her chair, and going to-
wards the door:—“I will fetch the notes
“for you this minute.”

“But are you certain it is your own
“desire?—“Yes, quite certain,” said
Matilda, going out at the door.

Charming woman! she knew that to
preserve a lively interest in the heart,
it is sometimes necessary indulgently to
sacrifice our own, perhaps, more pru-
dent inclinations to its innocent foibles.

The energy with which Matilda uttered the words "Yes, quite certain," set the mind of Conway at ease. He took a turn across the room; and whilst he admired anew the elegant object that had occasioned the conversation, he fully reconciled himself to the indulgence of his own inclination, by flattering himself he was about to gratify that of another. We often see the best kind of people in the world practising this mode of agreeable deceit upon themselves; what they like they are willing to believe, and they flatter themselves, that a ready assent to their inclination does not arise merely from an obliging compliance with their taste or pleasurable pursuits, but from a similar wish in the person who complies. Matilda returned in a few minutes with her writing

ing

ing box in one hand, and the notes in the other. "Here are materials for writing," said she; "I insist that you write immediately for the statue to be bought for you."

He smiled upon her with a look of enthusiastic tenderness, and took the pen from her hand; at that moment there came in Frederick, his eldest boy, beautiful as an Angel, and holding in his hand a violin which (having always betrayed a partiality for musical sounds,) had been given to him for a plaything. The pen fell from the hands of Conway; he flung the notes into the lap of Matilda, caught the sweet child in his arms; "take back your little treasure, my lovely, my too-indulgent girl," said he. "Why should I expend money in

“ purchasing a sculptured resemblance
“ of the God, when I have a young
“ Apollo glowing with life, health, and
“ beauty ; charming as the imagina-
“ tion of the poet, or the hand of sculp-
“ ture ever formed ?”

The tender mother smiled at the compliment to her little darling, whilst her heart exulted at this triumph of paternal affection, over an inclination which was just going to lead to an improvident action. The little fellow felt the full force of the tender pressure which accompanied his father's compliment; he clung about his neck, and imprinted a thousand affectionate kisses on his cheek; but, in an instant, some new idea seized his volatile fancy ; he eagerly slid from his embrace, and ran out of the room.

“ See,” said Conway, with a smile of
praiseful love, “ see, by what a mere
“ accident I was preserved from listen-
“ ing to your seductive wiles and acting
“ imprudently. Confess” continued he,
with an air of ironical reproach, “ that
“ you are—

“ Well,” cried she, interrupting him,
“ perhaps it might not be quite right ;
“ but I cannot bear that your generosity,
“ opposed to my father’s avarice, should
“ abridge so many of your innocent
“ pleasures.” Conway could make no
answer, but by holding her affectionately
to his heart, whilst the tears of grateful
pleasure started to his eyes, and added
softness to every line of a countenance
where sensibility and dignity were
blended.

Nature beheld the graceful weaknesses of these her favourite children through tears of delight : even Prudence, who had prepared a little reproof, now found her voice cherished by rising emotion, and hid her softened features on the bosom of nature.

CHAP. I.

CHAP. II.

"MATILDA," exclaimed Conway, "I want words to express my feelings, but my whole heart worships your virtues ; yet, you must forgive me, when I confess that I do not even to others, so often as you deserve them, make eulogiums on your actions. It sometimes happens that in endeavouring to avoid a fault we run into the contrary extreme. I have ever had a peculiar disgust to a kind of false gratitude which people often impose upon the world, and frequently, I believe, upon themselves for the true. It discovers itself in unseasonable and ostentatious enumerations of the affection,

“fection, zeal, and services, of their
“friends. In many instances it is only
“a medium through which they seek
“to impress their auditors with high
“ideas of their own excellence, by
“displaying their power of attach-
“ing objects so worthy of estimation,
“as those are whom they take such elaborate pains to praise.”

“I entirely,” said she, “enter into
“your sentiment ; that passage in Prior’s Henry and Emma has always
“appeared to me to possess a peculiar
“delicacy of thought when Emma
“exclaims to Henry,”

And whilst with secret joy and inward pride,
Which from the world my careful soul shall hide,
I see thee Lord and end of my desire,
Exalted high as virtue can require.

“That

“ That passage of Prior has great
“ beauty ; nor do I recollect any au-
“ thor who has expressed the thought
“ with so much clearness and grace.
“ How often, my Matilda, do I wish it
“ was in my power to exalt you as high
“ as your virtues deserve. It is then on-
“ ly that I repine at the narrowness of
“ my fortunes—there is not any thing
“ I would not do to add to your happi-
“ ness.”

“ Oh ! do not wish me an increase of
“ happiness ; but rather join with me in
“ wishing that what I now enjoy may be
“ continued to me. Conway, I some-
“ times think we are too happy ! ever
“ since I have been capable of reflection,
“ I have had an impression on my mind,
“ that when two persons of ardent feel-
“ ings

"ings and lively imaginations unite,
 "some sad and weighty calamity gene-
 "rally follows to give a balance to their
 "lot, which would otherwise prepon-
 "derate too much on the side of hap-
 "piness, for beings born to look on
 "this state of existence as only a pas-
 "sage to another. Desire, preference,
 "affection, are common to all; but, the
 "electric fire of true passion, which now
 "animates with delight, now desolates
 "with despair the human soul, few
 "hearts are formed to receive; it is a
 "gift like true genius, or true beauty,
 "but seldom bestowed; and, like those,
 "when given, is oftener a source of mi-
 "sery than of happiness."

The solemnity with which she spoke
 affected Conway at the moment; but
 he

he assumed an air of sprightliness, and replied : " Come, come, my dear girl, " we must not talk of felicity till we " grow unhappy : you must chase this " gloomy impression from your mind : " I do not like your philosophy : it is " too melancholy."

Just then their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant who delivered a letter to Mr. Conway.

" From Sir Harry Gaythorne," cried Matilda, hastily glancing her eyes over the superscription, " and contains an account of his marriage I dare say."

" It has most probably taken place by " this time," said Conway, whilst he broke

broke the seal, and immediately began to read. "This day has made me one of
"the happiest of the sons of men: this
"day has united me to one of the most
"charming women in the world."

"Still yourself, Sir Harry," exclaimed Matilda in the midst of joy; "you
"have not lost sight of that sentiment
"of politeness which instructs us to a-
"void wounding the feelings of others,
"even in trifles as well as in more essen-
"tial matters."

"Your expressions, One of the hap-
"piest of the sons of men! One of the
"most charming women in the world!
"prove you did not forget that you
"were writing to a married friend. Sir
"Harry's conduct forms one exception
"at

“ at least, to the remark of a spirited
“ and elegant writer, “ that it is the
“ characteristic of felicity to be unfeel-
“ ing.”

“ When I write,” said Conway, “ I
“ will pen your eulogium for my friend ;
“ —but now hear the request he makes to
“ you.—“ It is the earnest request of La-
“ day Gaythorne and myself, that you
“ and Mrs. Conway will spend the first
“ winter with us in town : and we will
“ have the happiness of spending part
“ of the summer with you in [the
“ country. Lady Gaythorne has form-
“ ed the most exalted ideas of the ex-
“ cellence of Mrs. Conway’s character
“ from the description of your friend,
“ and is impatient to become acquainted
“ with so charming a model of every
“ domestic

“domestic virtue.”—There! surely you
“cannot resist this? Come what an-
“swer shall I write to him?”

“I sincerely hope nothing will hap-
“pen to prevent your having the plea-
“sure of congratulating your friend in
“person on his marriage.”---“How eva-
“sive a reply is that!” said Conway; “but
“I confess, I expected it; the little air
“of discontent that clouded your fea-
“tures when I read the invitation, told
“me you did not wish to go as plainly
“as if you had uttered the words; and
“were I not certain that your disincli-
“nation sprung from the best motive in
“the world, your care of your chil-
“dren, I should be exceedingly hurt at
“it. That motive, however, may be
“obviated, as you have a friend in
“whom

“whom you can repose so full a confidence.”

“It is true, I could ; if you wish it,
“I will leave my children to the care of
“Mrs. Bates ; but I confess I should not
“be so happy as if I had them under
“my eye. Dissipation under such circumstances would be doubly irksome ;
“for even when I trod the giddy round
“of pleasure, before I had taken on me
“the important cares of a married life,
“the solidity of my education left a
“sensation on my mind, that often reproached me for so unprofitably spending my time ; and often amid the
“glitter of fashionable amusements, I
“have beheld the venerable form of my
“admirable Mentor, sister Frances,
“beckon me to retreat, reminding me
“of

“ of the studious, the elegant hours I
 “ spent in the convent of——”

“ My dear girl,” said Conway, “ I
 “ shall presently begin to fancy you possess
 “ the extraordinary powers ascribed to
 “ the highland seers. You prophesied
 “ once before, and now you talk of the
 “ gift of the second sight. But however,
 “ I may be convinced of the goodness
 “ of your intentions in declining this
 “ visit, I am afraid Sir Harry and Lady
 “ Gaythorne will take it unkindly. You
 “ should remember, that a virtue carried
 “ to an excess, degenerates into a fault.”

“ But surely,” said Matilda, “ ’tis my
 “ duty to”——“ Yet,” interrupted Conway,
 “ we should not let the practice of one
 “ virtue supersede the performance of
 “ another.

“ another. I think you would be acting
“ meritoriously in visiting this young
“ woman: your example would be of
“ great advantage to her. The change
“ in her situation is a very great one:
“ she is but just released from the prac-
“ tice of a plan of rigid œconomy adopt-
“ ed by her mother, to enable them to
“ make a genteel appearance from an
“ income otherwise insufficient to sup-
“ port them in that respectable rank of
“ life in which they were born. By her
“ marriage with Sir Harry she is raised
“ to rank and affluence: the youthful
“ mind bounding from restraint, too
“ often takes an irregular direction. Be
“ it yours at least to endeavour to coun-
“ teract the effects of those glaring
“ blandishments by which fashion and
“ extravagance so often seduce a young
“ mind,

“mind, suddenly raised [to grandeur,
“into the vortex of folly and dissipation.
“Go, my Matilda; let her see how
“gracefully the sober tints of domestic
“virtue may be blended with the light
“and animated colouring of polished
“wit and fashionable elegance.”

Matilda returned a bow and a smile for this compliment. But ah! how different from the grimace of ceremony, or the exulting smile of gratified vanity. It was the sweet smile of affectionate gratitude, and the lovely animation of conscious worth. The flexibility of Matilda's nature would have tempted her to have given up the point rather than to have contended with Conway; but she thought herself in the right, and strove against the impulse of

her feelings, which in this case she deemed a weakness, as strongly as many a turbulent spirited lady has been obliged to combat with an intemperate tongue, in order to maintain her reputation for high breeding. But, to return to the conversation; “you are far more partial to my little merits than they deserve,” said Matilda: “I think that a positive duty is not to be neglected in order to attempt to perform a good action, which however beneficial in its consequences, we are uncertain of achieving. I know that I can be of service to my children by staying at home; and I am sure if Lady Gaythorne need a pattern of right conduct, she will find examples even in the great world, more likely to awaken her attention, and influence her

“actions, than so imperfect a one as
“mine could do.”

“Do not exert yourself to argue farther on the subject Matilda,” said Conway with an air of reserve; “you
“know I never yet suffered you to comply with a request of mine when I
“could not convince you that it was
“right. Say no more about it; I have
“done with it;” and so saying, he took up his hat and quitted the room. The
tone of his voice was not in the least raised above his ordinary speech; and his gestures were perfectly calm; but there was a little haughtiness in the elevation of his neck which Matilda had often remarked as majestic dignity itself, but which she now viewed with

concern, as it convinced her he was still displeased.

Matilda thought it best not to say any thing more on the subject that evening, but to let the matter rest till the little displeasure Conway seemed to feel had subsided. She accordingly, when he returned into the house, began with the most pleasant cast of countenance she could assume, a different conversation; and he, probably tired of their late subject, though not resolved to give up the point, was not at all displeased with a cessation of their contention for the present.

CHAP. III.

THE next morning, immediately after breakfast, Conway went out of the parlour, and passing into the garden, said to a servant that he met, "If a person of the name of Barton, from Greenwood Farm, should call, let him be sent to me—I am going to walk in the shrubbery."—Matilda, in a meditating humour, sat down to her needlework;—she wished she had not said so much the evening before; or that her rhetoric had been more prevalent. Thus reflecting, she sat for about a quarter of an hour, when determining, either by more persuasive arguments to endeavour to bring him to her opinion, or to yield

yield gracefully to his, as she saw occasion, she put aside her work and walked into the garden. She had reached that part of the shrubbery where Conway was; the spreading branches of a laurel tree screened her from his sight, when a man, whom she knew not, approached the spot:—Matilda then recollected the orders which he had given on quitting the room; and supposing the stranger came on business, she would not interrupt them, therefore, still shaded from their sight, she seated herself upon a garden chair to wait till the person should depart. Through the leafy coverture, however, she could plainly discern their gestures; even the expression of their countenances.—The man a plain, well-looking farmer, approached with somewhat of that timid, irresolute

air which poverty, superadded to affliction, generally gives.—Conway returned his bow with great affability.

“I sent for you, Mr. Barton,” said Conway, “in order to”—“I apprehend
“so, Sir,” said the man, answering to what he imagined the other was about to say ;—“I am very sorry that I have
“not been able to be as regular in paying my rent as usual, and as I am
“sure I hoped always to have done,
“but I had a bad getting in last harvest,
“for my wheat was mildewed before
“I could carry it off the field, so it sold
“at a great loss, Sir ; and as my turnips
“did not do well neither, my cattle
“have been sadly pinched, and I have
“lost a good many. But my crop on
“the ground, thank God, looks promising,

“ mising, and I will thresh out enough
“ as soon as ever I get it into the barn,
“ to pay what I should have paid at
“ Midsummer ; so I hope, Sir.”

“ Say no more by way of apology,
“ Mr. Barton,” said Conway, interrupt-
ing him in his turn, “ as you have been
“ accustomed to make your payments
“ regularly, I should not have sent to
“ you on that account ; I had another
“ reason for requesting you to call upon
“ me.—I want to know whether your
“ father did not possess an estate called
“ Elm-wood Farm, in the county of
“ ——— ; can you recollect ever having
“ heard him mention any thing concern-
“ ing its falling into the possession of
“ Mr. Johnstone ?”

“ I was too young,” replied Barton,
“ when my father died to have been told
“ the particulars, but I remember to
“ have heard him say that estate belonged
“ once to my grandfather; and that was
“ he himself a man possessed of property
“ sufficient to enter into a lawsuit, with-
“ out fear of hurting his family, should
“ he lose his cause, he would try to get
“ it out of the hands of an attorney,
“ who had unjustly got it into his pos-
“ session.”

“ To this Mr. Johnstone,” replied
Conway, “ I was distantly related by
“ my mother’s side; and, at his death,
“ this estate devolved to me as his heir
“ at law, but on looking over some pa-
“ pers, I find many reasons to believe
“ if you were to commence a suit
“ against

“against me, you might make out a
“better title to it than I can.”

A ray of hope and pleasurable surprise animated the poor man's aspect for a moment, but quickly disappeared.—
“Alas! Sir,” said he, “do not talk of
“law;—I have no money to go to law
“with.”—“I have no doubt” said Conway, “of your gaining your cause;—
“and as I believe you to be an honest
“man, I will lend you money, and
“you may repay me as soon as you have
“it in your power.”

An offer made with so much apparent sincerity, so unexpected, and so uncommon, almost overwhelmed the poor man, whose health had been greatly impaired by distress of mind. Matilda saw his

change of countenance, and an expression of compassionate concern discovered her to Conway. Barton, recovering himself, attempted to express his gratitude.

“I only render you justice, Mr. Barton,” said Conway, waving his thanks.—“Think over this matter in your own mind and if you will let me see you to-morrow morning at ten o’clock, we will then talk farther on the subject, and I will give you the best advice I can how you ought to proceed.

“I would thank you, Sir,” said Barton, “if I could, but I have not words —I am all amazement.—What, Sir ! not only tell a poor needy man where
“ he

“ he may find a treasure, but put a spade
“ in his hands to dig it up, to your own
“ detriment!—Good God! I did not
“ think there had been such goodness,
“ such nobleness in the world as this!”
He bowed respectfully and retired.

“ Alas!” said Conway, turning to
Matilda, “ depraved indeed must the
“ age be, when even to an honest man
“ an act of justice, in the least degree
“ out of the common road, appears
“ like an act of generosity.”

“ It is true,” said Matilda, taking his
hand with an air of affectionate reve-
rence, “ your voluntary avowal to the
“ man, that you have reason to think
“ yourself not the lawful owner of the
“ estate, is only acting with strict inte-

“grity; but your offer to supply him
 “with money, certainly entitles you to
 “the praise due to a generous action.”

“I do not know,” replied Conway,
 “whether it would not have been a
 “want of charity not to have lent him
 “money.—I do him a material service,
 “and I am in no danger of hurting my-
 “self.”

“But why did you conceal from me
 “your intention?” said Matilda; “if
 “I have not your strength of under-
 “standing, I have, I trust, a kindred
 “rectitude of principle.”

“I did not doubt, Matilda, your
 “ready concurrence in my intention,
 “and I was about to communicate it to
 “you.”

“ you yesterday, but the arrival of Sir
“ Harry Gaythorne’s letter, and our
“ subsequent conversation, prevented
“ me.”

“ But why, my dear Conway, should
“ this poor man, who is now in distress,
“ wait the tardy process of the law, if
“ you are convinced he has a right to
“ to the estate.”

“ It appears to me that he has,” said
Conway; “ but I would have it proved
“ so to others.—You know, my good
“ Matilda, that even should your father
“ leave us all that we have a right to ex-
“ pect, which, considering his disposi-
“ tion, is not probable; the fortunes of
“ our children will not be large; and
“ as the comforts of life are few—the
“ sorrows

“ sorrows many, we have no right to
“ lessen, in the smallest degree, any
“ one’s portion of the gifts of for-
“ tune ; even though we took only from
“ his abundance to give to one whose
“ allotment was too scanty for his ne-
“ cessities : for it is probable, how par-
“ tial soever the distribution may ap-
“ pear, that this unequal possession of
“ one good, may be counterbalanced by
“ the total deprivation of some other.
“ Therefore I would not willingly be
“ reproached, nor would I have to re-
“ proach myself with having, through
“ what may be called a romantic idea of
“ justice, given away ever so small a
“ portion of our children’s birth-right.

“ A child of your’s reproach you ?”
said Matilda, kindling at the thought,
“ it

“ it can never happen.—The child who
“ does not glory in such a father, should
“ it possess the fascinating powers of a
“ syren, I would tear from my heart.”

“ I thank you, my good girl ;—I
“ thank you,” returned Conway, much
affected ; “ but had we not better walk
“ towards the house ?”

They turned to go in. In their walk
Conway revived the subject of their
friend's marriage ; but took care by no
direct word whatever, to request that
she would go to town. The affectionate
reverence with which the incident just
recorded, had filled Matilda's breast,
robbed her of the power of contending,
but she wished him to give her an op-
portunity of shewing him she yielded to
his

his solicitations; and though he did not again, in direct terms, repeat his request, she could plainly enough discover, it was the wish of his heart that she should comply with it, by his using, in the course of their conversation, the oblique expression "*as you have determined not to go to town.*"

Matilda, despairing of a more open utterance of his desire, stopped, turned round, and putting her hand in his, answered by a look,—“ I have *not* so determined; lead me where you will.”

“ You will go then !” said Conway.
“ —Do I read right ?

“ I purpose it,” returned Matilda.

“ How

“How much may be said” cried Conway, “without the articulation of
“a word!”

“Yes,” replied Matilda, “it has often struck me, that the language of
“the tongue was only designed by nature for the negotiation of business;
“for things affectionate, soothing, or
“witty, may be said by the eyes much
“more forcibly.”

“One might indeed justly infer so,”
“Matilda,” said Conway, smiling at this little fallacy, “had nature given to
“every one eyes as expressive as yours.”

CHAP. IV.

CONWAY had not finished speaking two minutes, before a servant approached, and told them their little Charles, mentioned before, was taken ill. Matilda's countenance instantly evinced the truth of Conway's late assertion; the strongest expression of maternal anxiety overspread her features, whilst she flew to the House without uttering a single word. She was too much alarmed for inquiry. Conway followed with feelings not less acute. They beheld their child extended on the knees of a female attendant; the beautiful bloom of his complexion was changed to a livid blackness. His limbs were distorted by convulsive

vulfive spasms; every vein was swelled beyond its natural size, and his features were made hideous by contorsion. Such was now that lovely infant, whom so recently his fond father had held to his heart, exultingly exclaiming, that his little frame, glowing with life, health, and beauty, exhibited a more striking resemblance of an infant Apollo than the imagination of the poet, or the hand of the sculptor ever formed!—Matilda, springing hastily forward, took the child and laid it on her lap; and whilst her head bent over it, the big drops of sorrow rolled from her cheek on its livid forehead. “Go instantly,” said Conway to one of the women, “tell Philip to fetch Dr. J——.”

His mandate was instantly obeyed.

As

As Conway held the little convulsed hand of the poor infant in his, his heart smote him with having too importunately solicited the tender, anxious mother to quit her children, In the deep anguish of her heart, Matilda was ready to exclaim, " Ah, see what constant care, what unwearied attention these little beings demand !"— But she checked herself on casting her eyes on Conway's face, which appeared the picture of grief :—" No, not even in the extremity of my own woe, will I add to his affliction !"

Dr. J—— arrived as speedily as the distance would admit, but only arrived to dispel all hopes of the child's recovery, who, according to his prediction, expired before another day dawned.

The

The parent's heart, formed in nature's roughest mold, and the soul of exquisite sensibility, will here mutually sympathize; for such is the selfishness of human nature, that even the greedy, unfeeling heir, whose heart bounded at hearing of his father's death;—who saw, without a sigh, a venerable and affectionate mother, brought by his vice and folly with sorrow to the grave;—who can behold a tender wife, the victim of his cruelty, expiring by slow but sure degrees, without remorse, has yet wept in bitter anguish; has melted even to infantine weakness at losing a child, a living resemblance of himself.

CHAP. V.

THIS calamitous incident retarded as will naturally be supposed, their journey till winter had nearly given place to spring. Matilda would far rather still have indulged her melancholly in the country ; but Conway, who thought the change of objects might give a new turn to her spirits, united his own to the pressing intreaties of Sir Harry and Lady G——, that she would spend a few weeks in Grosvenor-Square, as they had promised to spend part of the summer with Mr. and Mrs. Conway in the country. The news-papers had already announced to them that Lady Gaythorne had deposed the sovereign of former winters,

winters, and now reigned sole empress of the wide and brilliant provinces of taste; that the dress in which she was presented at court, had been a model for the fashionable world ever since; that Gaythorne hats, Gaythorne caps, and Gaythorne trimmings, were the high rage of the day. Her name never appeared in the public prints, but preceded by the epithets of lovely, elegant, enchanting, &c. &c.

These circumstances joined to the high opinion they had of Sir Harry's taste and judgement, led them to conclude that Lady Gaythorne was at least, a pretty or a fine woman. As to her being a perfect beauty, they made due allowances for the exaggeration of fame, who seldom discriminates sufficiently
amidst

amidst the splendor of high rank, and the trappings of fantastic finery, to make a correct portrait. But as some years had elapsed since the Conways had mixed much in the gay world, their eyes, long accustomed to the natural beauty and simple neatness of the provincial ladies, could see no charms in the gaudy substitutes of art, and consequently the person and attire of Lady Gaythorne had few attractions in their sight. But as I hope to have the honour of being read by some of those whose habits of thinking were early formed in the great world, and never afterwards spoiled by seclusion from it, I shall for their amusement embellish my work with as accurate a likeness of the lady now in question as my pencil is capable of delineating.

The precise age of Lady Gaythorne, I find impossible to ascertain: several persons who were intimate with her parents at the time of her birth, confidently declared she had seen her six and twentieth birth day before the period at which these memoirs commence. But this evidence there is, I grant, some cause to doubt, as the person most nearly concerned in the affair, Lady Gaythorne herself, always averred she was no more than eighteen; and we are credibly informed, as a corroborative circumstance, that her Ladyship's mother when speaking of her, even after her marriage, constantly used the epithet of young girl, or young thing. But as I pique myself on a strict impartiality, which is certainly one of the most material characteristics of a good

historian, I cannot refrain from inserting a thought which has this instant struck me, though it may in some degree weaken the force of the last fact.

The learned and ingenious author of the essay on antient virgins having gallantly declared it his opinion, that the æra of old maidhood does not commence till the age of forty-three: I think, and Lady Gaythorne's mother it is probable had the same idea, that according to this calculation the period of girlhood may be fairly extended beyond the age of twenty-six; and that of boyhood too. Nor do I doubt having on my side in support of this sentiment, those two able advocates, the witty, the eloquent Mr. Fox, and his brilliant friend Mr. Sheridan: ground-

ing my reliance on their having so often in their animated and classical orations stiled our wise young minister a boy, after, as I apprehend, he had passed that age.

But to the portrait.

Lady Gaythorne was tall, and thin even to leanness; her features were regular, but not one of them had the least pretensions to be called handsome, (except her eyes which were well shaped and of a fine blue,) nor was the want of beauty made up by the charms of an engaging aspect: an insolent pride being the prevailing expression of her countenance, except when to serve any particular purpose she cloathed it in the

wily smiles of allurements or dissimulation.

By leading the fashions however, she found out a remedy for almost every defect: the hollowness of her cheeks, and the sallowness of her complexion, she rectified by a liberal use of the best fard and rouge: and she continued to take from the length of her visage by having her hair dressed full round her face and low down upon her forehead, so as to hide a considerable part of it.

The meagerness of her neck was concealed by an artful arrangement of flowing curls; and the deficiency of a rising chest, aptly apologised for by an immense protuberance of gauze, lace, or muslin, supported by wire, catgut,

&c. &c. The extraordinary length and flatness of her arms from the shoulder to the elbow, she concealed by a large full sleeve tied with bunches of ribbands; and to increase the beauty of that part of her arm, which the custom of this country authorises every lady to shew undraped, a pair of black velvet bracelets encircled her wrists, which by making them look smaller gave somewhat more the appearance of a gradual swell to the upper part of her arm. Her feet which nature had a little unkindly formed rather large and flat, were according to the French fashion pinched into a pair of shoes, the soles of which scarcely exceeded the breadth of a half crown piece; but by this ardent compressure the instep was forced to a greater height, and the defect of

nature by that means happily atoned for.

But, there is yet another exquisite stroke of her ladyship's art that remains to be recorded, and which I beg pardon for not inserting in its relative situation. The skilful statuary by a judicious use of the chissel, can, when he has formed the shoulders of a female figure too high, easily reduce them to the line of beauty : but though a woman of fashion when blest with a happy genius, can as (I think I have shown) do much to increase the elegance of her own form, of a reduction familiar to that in the sculptor's power, there is I believe, at present no precedent.

It

It only remained therefore for lady Gaythorne to revive the Elizabeth Ruff, and introduce the immense handkerchief; and thus from a refinement of art, if she could not give her own form the symmetry she desired, she amply compensated for the want of it in herself, by introducing a fashion which rendered it of no effect in others. For let a statue of Therfites, or Æsop, and the Venus de Medicis, be habited in the Gaythorne mode, and they would appear equally graceful. Having resided from her childhood at St. Omers, she had acquired that free familiar air which distinguishes the French provincial ladies; but without their wit and engaging vivacity. She spoke the English tongue fluently, though with a foreign accent: this last circumstance was how-

ever, by no means a disadvantage to her; it gave a certain childishness to her articulation which affected the ear like the tones of simplicity; and which co-operating with a soft flexible voice, served in some degree to meliorate the strong lines of art which appeared in her person and manners.

For let a name of Thales, or Aëolus, and the Venus de Medicis, be habited in the Gyronne robe, and they would appear equally graceful. Having resided from her childhood at St. Omer, she had acquired that familiarity which distinguishes the French provincial in dress; but without their wit and engaging vivacity. She spoke the English tongue fluently, though with a foreign accent: this last circumstance was how-

C. H. A. B.

CHAP. VI.

IT was between the hours of seven and eight in the evening when Conway and Matilda arrived at the elegant mansion of Sir Harry Gaythorne. At the door of the apartment to which they were shewn, they were met by Sir Harry, who with a countenance beaming with pleasure, led them to Lady Gaythorne.

"Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Conway."

Lady Gaythorne uttering every expression the vocabulary of good breeding furnishes for such occasions, after

having returned the bows of Mr. Conway, took the hand of Matilda and led her to a sofa at the upper end of the room. Sir Harry and Conway again seized the hands of each other, repeating expressions of joy at this meeting, with a warmth that delighted Matilda, who instantly turned her eyes towards Lady Gaythorne, expecting to find her employed, and equally charmed with herself in contemplating the looks of friendly affection which animated the countenances of both. But her Ladyship was much more importantly engaged than in tracing the lines which the gentle and generous affections of the soul impress on the aspect; for the ends depending from a knot of ribband on one of her sleeves were not of an equal length, and she was busied in adjusting
this

this part of her drapery. Having completed it, she turned to Mrs. Conway and told her, "she had suffered a great deal from having been so long deprived of the happiness of seeing her and Mr. Conway; and thanked them both for the honour and happiness they gave her by their visit."

Mr. and Mrs. Conway were making the politest return to this compliment, when a thundering footman's rap shook the house with a violence that must totally have deranged her ladyship's nerves, had it proceeded from any other cause than that of announcing visitors. Of this we have not the least doubt, having been credibly informed, that though she never discovered the smallest emotion, but sat with the utmost fortitude

during the last-mentioned noise. The heavy mechanical double knock of the postman never failed making her start, complain of her nerves, and declare that the sound went quite through her brain, and put her whole frame in agitation for a quarter of an hour afterwards.

3^d Sir Harry continued talking with his friend till the sound of feet and the rustling of silks on the staircase caused him to exclaim with surprise, turning to her Ladyship—"Your orders have been neglected!—I requested this evening we might be denied to other visitors; thinking after so long a journey it would be more agreeable to Mr. and Mrs. Conway."—There was no opportunity for any answer from Lady Gaythorne;

thorne ; but a look of displeasure which she had hardly time to chase from her features when the servant entered and announced—" Lady Wittington, and "Mrs. Neville." Lady Gaythorne having paid her compliments with great respect to the former, vouchsafed a nod and courtesy to the latter. She placed Lady Wittington on the sofa beside Mrs. Conway, and Mrs. Neville sunk into the first unoccupied chair on which she cast her eye.

" Did your Ladyship see Mara's
"entrée at the Opera?"

" Yes, and was enchanted ! What a
" voice ! What brilliant execution ! —
" But I own I was vexed to hear her
" receive so much applause : the info-
lent

“lent caprice of her late conduct ought
 “to have been punished by marks of ne-
 “glect and contempt.”

“Why wish it should be so?” said Sir
 Harry. “I fear that the public in general
 “is too apt to delight in humbling the
 “spirits of persons of great superiority
 “of talents, who from want of fortune
 “are dependant on it for support and
 “protection, whilst the pride and arro-
 “gance of the rich and great pass fre-
 “quently unnoticed, always unpunished.”

“Oh! because we have it not in our
 “power to punish them,” replied Lady
 Gaythorne.

“Pardon me; we have it always in
 “our power to shew our disapprobation
 “of

“ of their conduct in the way just men-
“ tioned, by marks of neglect and con-
“ tempt. How wide is the difference !
“ If in this age of frivolity and dissipa-
“ tion, a man or woman of fashion con-
“ descends to cultivate the smallest ta-
“ lent for arts, science, or literature,
“ their performances are extolled with
“ rapture; candid criticism is precluded,
“ and the arbitrary umpire, fashion,
“ stamps their value. They meet, per-
“ haps, with some few instances of per-
“ sonal envy ; but this is amply made
“ amends for, by the unmixed applause
“ they receive from the many. On the
“ contrary, what is his lot who is ne-
“ cessitated to depend for the means of
“ existence on even the sublimest efforts
“ of Heaven born genius ? Why the
“ supercilious, affected disregard of ma-

ny

"ny who understanding his excellence,
 "want the soul to spread the worth.
 "they love; and the ignorant commen-
 "taries, and even the insolent disdain
 "of those who can neither understand
 "nor judge. It should seem, that we
 "feel humbled to receive pleasure from
 "our inferiors in birth and fortune, and
 "take these methods of revenging our-
 "selves for the superiority nature has
 "given them over us."

A little beam of pleasure lighted the
 pensive features of Mrs. Neville while
 he spoke. "Most truly said, Sir Harry,"
 cried Lady Wiltlington; "you have
 "spoken what my soul feels. It is a
 "view of human nature, that almost
 "makes one ashamed of being of the
 "same species with some of the

“the same species with individuals
“capable of sentiments so illiberal.”

Lady Gaythorne either did not, or pretended not to pay the least attention to what Sir Harry had been saying; and when Lady Wittington had ended, she turned to her with an air, whether real or fictitious, that implied she had been reflecting on a very important subject. “Pray,” said she, “did your
“Ladyship observe Mrs. W——’s hat,
“the night of Dido: was it steel or dia-
“mond that glittered so violently at a
“distance?”

Sir Harry appeared mortified to the quick; his eye brows grew more elevated at her affected inattention to the conversation which had passed, and the
hue

hue of resentment shot swiftly into his cheeks; but making an effort to suppress the emotion of anger, it died away, and his features settled into the languid look of disappointed hope.

Lady Wittington replied, " she really
" could not determine ;" and just then
Mr. Needham was announced,

CHAP. VII.

IN this gentleman's character there was something very singular; it was a character little understood. He passed for a cynical observer and commentator on the follies of mankind; whilst in reality, he made his way in the world by a consummate knowledge in the art of flattery. His father, who was for many years a merchant of great eminence, soon after young Needham had completed his studies at the University, died insolvent. Whilst he was in the agonies of surprise and affliction at this melancholy change in his affairs, a young gentleman who had lately succeeded to his paternal inheritance, and
into

into whose friendship he had insinuated himself at College, gave him an assylum in his house, and settled upon him an annuity of a hundred pounds a year. Here he was introduced upon a footing of equality to the best company.

Happening, however, to give offence to the lady his friend, a few years after married, he was genteelly dismissed from the house, and though he still continued to visit there, it was plain he was not welcomed as an intimate friend. Accustomed to the indolent softnesses, and the brilliant amusements of high life, he knew not how to relinquish them, and he revolved a thousand schemes in his head for enabling a man possessed of a bare hundred pounds a-year, to share in the voluptuous indulgences, the expensive

penfive pleasures of the affluent. He saw the thing done every day by those who had the faculty of applying themselves with address to the weaknesses, the vices, the caprices, of mankind.—And what he had seen of life had shewn to him, that the readiest way to the goal he aimed at was by the road of some species of adulation. He saw the beaten road of indiscriminating flattery so thronged, that he feared he should be often jostled in his passage, and, perhaps, at last, totally overset by some of those who possessed more of the graces of manner than himself. He resolved, therefore, to strike out a path for himself, which yet should eventually lead him to the same point. He determined to become a general censor, and a partial flatterer ;—
but

but imagine not, reader, his encomiums were confined to the rich and powerful: he found it his advantage sometimes to bestow them on persons not distinguished by these advantages; and in this he was judicious, for it had to flight observers the appearance of disinterestedness, which, aided by the austerity with which he inveighed against the vices of the great world, made his praises more ardently coveted; and more highly estimated when obtained.

He had fathomed the depth of Lady Gaythorne's understanding; he knew the extent of Sir Harry's fortune, and played his cards accordingly. He had a sort of sarcastic wit, which entertained; and as it is not difficult to make our conversation admired on an ill-natured subject

subject *without* this ingredient, yet when it is intermixed, it grounds a reputation for the talent of shining in conversation, that nothing can shake. For though some, through good-nature, and others from a dread of being lashed in the same way, feel uneasy sensations; yet the far greater number of the auditors will be thorough admirers; for there is but a small part of the world who see their own characters clearly enough to think themselves objects for satiric animadversion; and of those who on such occasions feel for others, *very small indeed* is the number. Even those who, from a timidity of disposition, fear a satirist, will court him for the same reasons,—from a dread, and a knowledge of his malignity; as the simple Indians
worship

worship the Devil, to court him not to
sour their palm wine.

Sir Harry Gaythorne, on the entrance
of Mr. Needham, had crossed over to
that side of the room on which Mrs.
Neville sat, and began a conversation
with her, by saying, "What do you
think, Mrs. Neville, of the new dance,
"Il Convito di Pietro?"

"I saw great part of it with admira-
tion," returned she.

"I thought it a subject worthy the
contemplation, and likely to strike
the imagination of an historical paint-
er, which made me mention it."

"Oh,

“ Oh, good Heavens !” returned she,
“ there is in the attitudes, the expression
“ of Lepicq, the boldness, the terrible
“ graces of Angelo, the abashed, the
“ self-reproaching humility ;—the re-
“ morse-struck airs, which Guido knew
“ to give in a few of his pieces, beyond
“ every other master. I declare I know
“ no modern professor of any one of
“ the imitative arts, who could depict
“ the passions with greater force or just-
“ nefs than Lepicq.”

“ Little Neville” said Needham, with
a patronizing and sagacious air, “ you
“ speak very well as an artist, but
“ though as such you may be allowed
“ to contemplate *Il Convito di Pietro*
“ with delight, the tongue and the pen
“ of the moralist should stigmatise it as

“ an exhibition that marks the profliga-
“ cy of the age in colours the most glar-
“ ing. And I have no doubt, if repre-
“ sentations of this kind continue to
“ be encouraged, but the Christian
“ idea of future punishments will con-
“ vey as little horror as the heathen no-
“ tion of Tartarus ; and the records
“ of scripture be as familiarly ran-
“ sacked for materials for dramatic
“ composition, as have been the pages
“ of mythological story. Nor should I,
“ I confess, be surprized to see a panto-
“ mime announced, taken from some
“ passage in holy writ. The Tempta-
“ tion, for instance,—and the Ascent of
“ Satan, bearing to the pinnacle of a
“ high rock the Saviour of the World,
“ immortalise some Harlequin of the
“ present day.”

“ Good

“ Good God ! you are too severe,
 “ surely, Mr. Needham,” said Lady
 Witlington ; whilst looks of surprize and
 momentary awe passed over the counte-
 nances of all but Lady Gaythorne, who
 with an air of indifference replied, “ I
 “ hate pantomimes ; I never stay to see
 “ them ; the boxes are always empty be-
 “ fore they begin.”—“ True,” replied
 Sir Harry ; “ and I am inclined to
 “ think, bad as the age is, representa-
 “ tions of that kind must for some time
 “ longer be confined to dances at the
 “ Opera ; for I much question whether,
 “ considering the higher class of people
 “ go out before the pantomime begins,
 “ there would at present be found a par-
 “ ty strong enough to support them.”

“ Oh, Sir,” returned Needham,
“ but spectacles of that kind would, I
“ have no doubt, inspire a rage for the
“ tricks of Harlequin, and rivet our
“ people of rank as firmly to their seats
“ as ever did the graces of Vestris, or the
“ majesty of Simonet ; for an appear-
“ ance of irreligion can give conse-
“ quence to the meanest objects, and
“ throw an air of fashion over the vul-
“ garest amusements.”

“ I should be afraid,” said Mr. Con-
“ way, smiling, “ that the taste of the
“ age would be much against the revi-
“ val of any thing like the long-explod-
“ ed farces, called the Mysteries and
“ Moralities—But if the idea of them
“ were so far revived as to make the
“ Devil a character in modern farces, it
“ would

“ would have one good effect,—it would
 “ reconcile us, in some degree, to the
 “ monstrous plots and unnatural inci-
 “ dents, so much the dramatic fashion
 “ of the present day ; as, in those an-
 “ cient pieces, the Devil was invariably
 “ the *plotter of all the mischief*.”—Far-
 ther conversation on the subject was pre-
 vented by Sir Harry’s asking Mrs. Ne-
 ville, if she should exhibit at the Royal
 Academy any of her paintings this year ?

“ Only one piece,” she returned ;—
 “ the subject is Minerva conducting a
 “ young pupil to the Temple of Sci-
 “ ence :—it was begun at the request of
 “ Lady Wittington, and the principal
 “ figure is a portrait of her ladyship.”

“ Had Mrs. Neville’s talents been in
“ the Hogarthian stile,” said Needham,
speaking to Sir Harry in a key loud
enough for those who sat next him to
hear, and yet so whispered as to give the
party in question some colour for seem-
ing not to hear ; “ and she had designed
“ to represent a wrinkled hag, conduct-
“ ing a young pupil to a modern Tem-
“ ple of Venus, I should have com-
“ mended her choice of a fitter.”

Mrs. Neville changed colour, and the
rest who heard him looked absolutely
terrified. But Lady Wirlington, with
an admirable presence of mind, pretend-
ed to be too deeply engaged in conver-
sation with Lady Gaythorne to appre-
hend they were talking of her. The
attention Needham had paid to Mrs.
Neville,

Neville, had given that lady some sort of consequence with Lady Gaythorne, for she had looked once or twice towards her; and that without any haughtiness in her aspect. Lady Wittington had, perhaps, perceived this, and thought it the favourable moment to propose the thing for which she had introduced her protégée to Lady Gaythorne;—for she said, “ Mrs. Neville would think her-
“ self much honoured if your Ladyship
“ would sit to her pencil for some histo-
“ rical figure, as it will undoubtedly be
“ a means of bringing her talents into
“ notice.”

“ Is portrait painting her forte?”

“ She has great excellence in that
“ way.”

E 4

“ And

“ And you tell me she has pieces
“ every year in the Exhibition?—Well,
“ I will call to-morrow morning and see
“ her pictures;—but does your Lady-
“ ship think there will be time to finish
“ a picture of me before the Exhibition
“ opens?—for that is a material point
“ with me; as I assure you my sole mo-
“ tive in having one done is to serve
“ your friend.—Three of the first artists
“ have my portrait in hand at this
“ time.”

Having accomplished, by this sacrifice to Lady Gaythorne's vanity, the point she aimed at, Lady Wittington told Mrs. Neville the honour Lady Gaythorne designed her;—and after the customary forms had passed, Lady Wittington and Mrs. Neville withdrew.—

They

They had scarcely left the room, when Needham launched into animadversions on the service it would be of to the fame of the paintress, to delineate a figure so distinguished for beauty as Lady Gaythorne's.

The former part of Needham's conversation, though some of his ideas had a little startled her, had rather tended to prejudice Mrs. Conway in his favour; she thought many of his strictures well meant and striking, but his coarse manner of speaking of Lady Wittington had disgusted her a good deal; for from the interest she seemed to take in the success of Mrs. Neville's talents she was inclined to think well of her head and heart: and therefore as she ever made it a point to speak all she could in favour

of those she heard depreciated, she took occasion, when her ladyship had disappeared, to commend her zeal in the cause of the person whose abilities she patronised.

“ All a farce, madam ?” returned Needham, hastily ;—“ I have had opportunities of knowing Lady Wittington’s character well, and she is sensible of it, which was the reason she would not seem to hear what I said.—Towards this very woman, whom she pretends to patronize, I know she has acted basely.—The fact is this :—Lady Wittington, ever since a certain affair has been talked of, finding herself but coldly received by many of her friends, and the circle of her acquaintance likely to diminish, prudently

“ prudently bethought of setting up
“ herself as a patroness of the professors
“ of arts and science ; and by the libe-
“ rality with which she spends her mo-
“ ney, and the *eclat* of a title, she con-
“ trives to bring about her a number of
“ that class of people ;—by this means
“ she has collected in her train of visit-
“ ing acquaintance, perhaps, upon the
“ whole, characters more respectable
“ (though not so brilliant with respect
“ to exterior splendour) than those she
“ formerly associated with ; for, with
“ the hope of meeting persons with ta-
“ lents congenial to their own, many
“ people of rank who are distinguished
“ for worth and a love of elegant art
“ and liberal science, honour her par-
“ ties with their presence.—And, by de-
“ grees, I dare say she will again be re-

“ceived by every description of persons
“who figure in the world of fashion.—
“But to the immediate subject.—Mrs.
“Neville was the daughter of one of
“Lady Wittington’s tenants, a reputa-
“ble farmer in —— shire:—the girl
“had been educated at a country board-
“ing school, where she had been taught
“to draw by an indifferent master who
“attended the boarders. Some sketches
“she had made were accidentally shewn
“to Lady Wittington, when she was in
“the country, and an *amateur* of fashion
“who was then on a visit to her lady-
“ship, pronouncing them above medi-
“ocrity, she thought that a favourable
“opportunity presented itself for distin-
“guishing her love of art, and her philan-
“thropic disposition at the same time, she
“accordingly sent for the young woman,
“took

“ took her into her house, and furnished
 “ her with proper masters to finish her
 “ education ; particularly attending to
 “ that art she had shewn the dawn of abi-
 “ lities to excel in. Here she continued
 “ studiously endeavouring to improve
 “ by the assistance offered, and gave no
 “ cause of disgust, till a young man of
 “ immense fortune, the nephew of Lady
 “ Witlington, and to whom Lord Wit-
 “ lington had been guardian, by coming
 “ frequently to the house, appeared to
 “ have conceived the strongest admira-
 “ tion of Miss Markland’s charms,
 “ worth, and talents ; and as her lady-
 “ ship knew him to be amiable, and of
 “ that spirit which minds of her lady-
 “ ship’s cast are pleased to stile roman-
 “ tically generous, she feared he would
 “ offer honourable addresses to her pro-
 “ tegée

“ tegée,—a circumstance she could not
“ think of with patience, as his estate,
“ in case of Mr. Mansel’s dying with-
“ out an heir, Lord Writlington had
“ left to her ladyship.—She remon-
“ strated with him in the strongest terms
“ against the dishonour he was about to
“ bring upon their family, by descend-
“ ing to a plebian alliance. She even
“ added hints, reflecting on the morals
“ of Miss Markland ; but Mr. Mansel saw
“ the design she aimed at, and they had
“ no other effect on his mind than to
“ irritate him to say, he thought a wo-
“ man of worth, however lowly born,
“ did more honour to a family than one
“ of illustrious birth, whose actions
“ were ignoble. This stroke, which
“ she could not but perceive was meant
“ for herself, fired Lady Writlington with
“ so

“ so strong a resentment, that she deter-
“ mined, at all events, to gratify her
“ pride, avarice, and revenge by frustra-
“ ting their union; and she instantly set
“ every engine at work to bring about
“ her purpose. She knew Mr. Mansel
“ was going out of town the next day,
“ and she had drawn from his conversa-
“ tion of this day that he had not yet
“ made a direct offer of his hand and
“ fortune to Miss Markland, and she
“ contrived to engage her so that he
“ could have no opportunity of speak-
“ to her alone that day.

“ As soon as he was gone she entered
“ upon the subject she had been for some
“ days thinking of.

“ ‘ My dear Markland,’ said her lady-

“ ship with a tone of kindness, ‘ I have
“ long been thinking of some way of
“ establishing you in life, that may be a
“ certain resource when I shall be no
“ more ; a period, which, considering
“ my ill state of health, may not be far
“ distant.—I have something to propose
“ to you, which I hope will be approved
“ by you.’”

“ The poor girl, with tears of grati-
“ tude thanked her ladyship for her kind
“ concern, and said she was sure she could
“ suggest nothing but what was for her
“ best interest. Lady Wittington then
“ said she had heard of a person who was
“ remarkably clever at embroidery, who
“ wished to find a partner who had a
“ turn for flower painting—Now as this
“ appears to me, added her ladyship,
“ pot

“ not an ineligible plan, if you approve
“ it, I will advance the few hundred
“ pounds required, and you shall imme-
“ diately enter into business, and I can
“ almost insure you success, for I will
“ recommend you to all my friends.—

“ The words ‘ enter into business,’ struck
“ Miss Markland to the heart; and
“ whilst Lady Writlington was deliver-
“ ing this speech she felt as if undergo-
“ ing a sudden metamorphosis;—to be
“ thus in a moment degraded from an
“ historical painter to a little pattern-
“ drawer for an embroiderer, was too
“ much!—she could not articulate a
“ syllable for some minutes; at last she
“ burst into tears.—‘ What have you to
“ object, Miss Markland,’ said Lady
“ Writlington,—‘ this is the first time
“ I ever perceived in you symptoms of
“ ingratitude.’

“ Oh

“ ‘ Oh, madam !’ returned she, endeavouring to stifle her tears, ‘ I am not, I will not be ungrateful—but I had flattered myself—I had hoped—’

“ ‘ With what had you flattered yourself—what had you hoped, Miss Markland ?’

“ ‘ I had hoped, encouraged by your praises, and those of the friends you procured me, that I should have been able to provide for myself in time by the practice of a more elevated talent.’

“ ‘ But you know, my child,’ returned her ladyship, appearing to soften a little, ‘ the success of exertions of that nature is very uncertain ; and many years must elapse before even great artists

“ artists can extract a support from
“ their labours—they must wait till
“ time and the voice of the public have
“ given a sanction to their abilities :—
“ besides, it really takes a course of
“ years to acquire excellence sufficient
“ to gain the applause of unprejudiced
“ judges, and I could willingly see you
— “ settled in some certain way of provid-
“ ing for yourself; for the delicacy of
“ my constitution renders the tenure of
“ my life very precarious.—I assure you
“ when I was last ill I thought much
“ about you; and I resolved, if I reco-
“ vered, to see you speedily fixed in
“ some way of life—for it is dreadful to
“ think to what a fine young woman
“ like you might be subjected, without
“ the means of providing for herself.”

“ Miss

“ Miss Markland, who had all the
“ real modesty of true genius, with a
“ singular meekness of spirit, was much
“ struck by the words ‘ unprejudiced
“ judges ;’—she began to fear lest the
“ applause she had received might have
“ been given in compliment to the par-
“ tiality Lady Wittington was supposed
“ to have for her ; and that she had
“ over-rated her own talents. She cal-
“ led to mind,—or rather what had been
“ said recalled to her mind, that her
“ birth entitled her to no higher situa-
“ tion than that her patroness was pro-
“ posing to place her in ; and reflections
“ like these served a little to silence
“ those feelings of disgust which rose at
“ the first hearing Lady Wittington’s
“ proposition ; yet, though she submit-
“ ted without murmuring, she could
“ not

“ not without lamenting. She recollected it was not only a change of situation, but a change of society, she was about to experience ;—but looking on these feelings as the suggestions of a spirit revolting at the dispensations of Providence, she strove to subdue them, and with the best grace she could command, expressed her submission to what her ladyship thought for her best interest. They went that day and inquired the particulars they wished to know of the person in question ; and it now only remained to pay the compliment to her father of submitting the scheme to his opinion.— This was immediately given in favour of her ladyship’s plan.

“ The

“ The day was fixed for her going;
“ —she went—with what sentiments
“ may easily be conceived.

“ When Mr. Mansel returned from
“ the country he inquired where Miss
“ Markland was?—he was told ‘ gone
“ into the country.—’ He asked to be
“ informed where, but this was decisive-
“ ly denied by Lady Witlington.—He
“ then declared to her ladyship he would
“ write to Mr. Markland to inquire the
“ residence of his daughter;—but the
“ very moment he had quitted the house,
“ Lady Witlington sat down and wrote to
“ Mr. Markland, to warn him against
“ discovering to Mr. *Mansel* the place
“ where she had fixed his daughter;
“ telling him his designs respecting his
“ daughter were not of a right nature,
“ and

“ and that it was fearing they might
“ prove fatal to her honour, that she
“ had removed her from her house,
“ and wished to conceal her from Mr.
“ Mansel. The good man, in conse-
“ quence of this letter, resolutely re-
“ fused him any information. These
“ obstacles had the contrary effect from
“ what her ladyship wished ; they only
“ heightened the passion she hoped
“ they would subdue.—He employed
“ intreaties, expostulations, tears, to
“ draw from Lady Wiltlington the place
“ of Miss Markland’s abode, but she
“ was inexorable. Fearing, however,
“ that a passion so violent, acting on a
“ mind ardent by nature, would in time,
“ in spite of all her machinations,
“ achieve what it aspired to enthusiasti-
“ cally, she planned a scheme, vile in
“ its

“ its projection, and fatal in its execu-
“ tion; engaging in it one whom she
“ knew had an inclination for the person
“ of Miss Markland—this was a Mr. Ne-
“ ville, a painter, who had been former-
“ ly one of her ladyship’s favourites in the
“ line of gallantry, and whose abilities
“ as an artist, by her indefatigable ex-
“ ertions, she had brought into notice;
“ she told him if he would gain the hand
“ of Miss Markland she would present
“ him with a thousand pounds. As he
“ was at this time much pressed by im-
“ portunate creditors, and really was
“ charmed with the person of the young
“ lady, he resolved to leave no attempt
“ untried to bring about an event, in all
“ respects to him desirable. By Lady
“ Wittington’s advice he took apart-
“ ments at the house where she had
“ placed

“ placed Miss Markland ; here he paid
“ her the most unremitted attentions,
“ and used all the rhetoric he was master
“ of to conciliate her affections, but in
“ vain ; she was resolute in her refusal.
“ Determined, at all events, to effect
“ the purpose he had in view, he put in
“ practice a stratagem which had at first
“ been mentioned to him by her lady-
“ ship as their *dernier resort*. As he
“ boarded in the family, he had easily
“ an opportunity of infusing into some-
“ thing she drank at supper, a sleeping
“ potion. The somniferous draught
“ soon operated ; she withdrew. He staid
“ with the other lady till she retired for
“ the night, and then found the cham-
“ ber of the unhappy Miss Markland, on
“ whom the soporific liquor had had its
“ natural effects. The morning came—

“ abandoned to despair, she attempted
“ to destroy herself—he prevented her :
“ she flung herself into a coach, and was
“ driven to the house of her false friend ;
“ he followed her as fast as possible ;
“ he was there almost as soon as herself.
“ She had not had time to articulate a
“ word when he appeared—sighs, tears,
“ and convulsive groans alone had told
“ her ladyship her diabolical plan had
“ had its wished-for consequence.

“ ‘ Approach not, thou monster ! ’—
“ cried Miss Markland ; but finding he
“ still advanced, she was flying out of
“ the room.

“ ‘ For heaven’s sake !—say one of
“ you what is the meaning of all this ! ’

“ cried

“cried Lady Wittington, with an air
“of the most finished hypocrisy.”

““Oh, detain me not another mo-
“ment in his presence!” cried Miss
“Markland, ‘or sure I am I shall do
“some deed of desperation.’—He bar-
“red her passage—he knelt at her feet
“—pleaded the violence of his passion,
“which nothing could subdue—swore
“that he had been instigated to the ac-
“tion he had committed by the hope
“that she would marry him; and with
“every mark of well-acted passion in-
“treated her instantly to promise him
“that happiness.

“She rejected him with the bitterest
“reproaches—he implored the media-
“tion of Lady Wittington. Enough

“ had now fallen from them to permit
“ her ladyship with *propriety* to *seem* to
“ understand somewhat of the cause of
“ this scene;—she burst forth into
“ the loudest and most opprobrious in-
“ vectives against Neville, and seemed
“ strongly to abet Miss Markland in her
“ refusal of his offer. When her lady-
“ ship had played this part as long as
“ she thought necessary, she, after hav-
“ ing at his earnest entreaty, spoken with
“ him some minutes alone, she return-
“ ed to Miss Markland, and apparently
“ melted by his supplications and peni-
“ tence, even solicited her to accept his
“ hand. She painted to her, that if any
“ thing of what had passed should trans-
“ pire, the world, which always ranks
“ itself on the male side, would never
“ receive her among the number of the
“ innocent;

“innocent; and that should her father
 “hear any thing to her dishonour, it
 “would bring his reverend hairs with
 “sorrow to the grave. By arguments
 “and suggestions like these, she strove
 “to persuade her that nothing remained
 “to preserve her honour but to give
 “him her hand. Miss Markland was
 “long inexorable; but Lady Witling-
 “ton, at last, deploring her obstinacy
 “and blindness to her own interest, said
 “that if she persisted in sentiments so
 “injudicious, she must withdraw her
 “countenance and protection.

“The thought of being left to the
 “world unpatronised, with perhaps a
 “tarnished character; the distress of her
 “parents, rose to her mind: bewildered
 “between the supplications of the one,

“ and the arguments of the other, she
“ was at length led to the altar. Their
“ marriage was announced in the papers ;
“ young Mansel saw it, and madness was
“ the consequence. His friends were
“ obliged to put him under the care of a
“ physician, eminent for his skill in treat-
“ ing persons afflicted in that way. He
“ was removed to the Doctor’s house a
“ few miles from town.—Here Mrs. Ne-
“ ville visited, and happening to be walk-
“ ing in the garden, one of the ladies of
“ the family requested her to sit down in
“ a little arbour to sing to them : she be-
“ gan. It chanced that Mr. Mansel, who
“ was at that time in a melancholy and
“ quiet state, had been suffered to ramble
“ about the garden. The sound of a
“ voice so well remembered drew him
“ to the place ; the ladies who were
“ with

“ with her perceived him approach, but
“ Mrs. Neville did not. He continued
“ fixed to the spot as if beholding a vi-
“ sion that he feared would the next mo-
“ ment disappear, till she had ended
“ her song; when darting eagerly towards
“ her, he exclaimed with looks of the
“ most enthusiastic delight.— Have I at
“ length found her?—Yes! it is she,
“ and I am blest for ever. He seemed
“ to have entirely lost all ideas of her
“ marriage, and entreated her in the most
“ passionate terms to consent to unite her
“ fate with his. She could make no re-
“ ply; the agitation of her mind was
“ only expressed by her countenance.
“ She at length disengaged herself, and
“ hastened from him, accompanied by
“ the other ladies. He strove to overtake
“ her, and ran wildly from those who
“ attempted

“ attempted to detain him. But, a lucid
“ moment being lent him, the recollection
“ of her marriage flashed upon his memo-
“ ry.—She is married ! exclaimed he,
“ stopping his course, and flinging himself
“ on the ground, and then wandering
“ again : Ah ! she can never return : Lady
“ Witlington will never let her return.
“ And this thought again drove him to
“ that deplorable state of phrenzy, from
“ which he had so recently emerged.”

“ The good little woman,” continued
Needham, “ has an infinity of fortitude ;
“ and, I believe, she is looking towards
“ another world, for that happiness she
“ can never expect in this.”

“ Lady Witlington still with the utmost
“ appearance of anxiety, exerts herself
“ to

“ to serve Neville and his wife, and in
“ this she acts with judgement: she thinks
“ her continued intercourse with them,
“ and her zeal in behalf of their success
“ in life, will appear as evidence against
“ the truth of reports, which in spite of
“ all her caution have circulated to her
“ disadvantage.”

The whole company were much
affected by the particulars they had
heard; and Sir Harry, looking at Lady
Gaythorne, said; “ how were you
“ introduced to Lady Wittington?”

“ I met her Ladyship at Mrs. Cole-
“ ville’s assembly, and I thought I
“ could be guilty of no impropriety
“ in making the acquaintance, as I saw
“ her at the house of so respectable a
“ a lady.”

F 5

“ Yes,”

“Yes,” said Needham, “she often receives a card when Mrs. Coleville has a public night; for that lady, it is well known, piques herself more on the fullness of her rooms on her assembly nights, than on her best virtue. But Lady Wittington is never admitted to her private parties, nor let in when she calls in a morning; and her visits are always returned by a card, and Mrs. Coleville’s chariot, which she contrives to send, when it has set her down at some house in her Ladyship’s neighbourhood.”

Needham soon after rose and departed.

The moment he was gone, Sir Harry rising hastily, rung the bell; when a servant appeared, “how came it,” said he,

he, "that you let in company when
" Lady Gaythorne desired no one might
" be admitted."

" My Lady Sir, told me she would
" be at home to every one; and I re-
" ceived no orders since to the con-
" trary."

" You will remember now then,"
said he, " that your Lady desires that
" no one may be admitted." When the
servant had disappeared,

" If you recollect, I requested that
" you would be denied to every one
" but our expected friends—I thought,
" after a long journey, a family party
" would be more agreeable to them than
" accidental visitors or promiscuous
" company."

“ company. I am sure, to me, an even-
“ ing spent in their society, unmixed
“ with any other, has always afforded
“ the highest, truest, enjoyment.”

An effort to maintain her character for good breeding, banished a misty cloud from her Ladyship's brow, and with a blandishing smile, drawing back her head, and just lifting up and shewing the palms of her elegant spread hands, with a look of the most pretty girlish wonder and recollection, she said; “ Oh ! I beg your pardon, but
“ I entirely forgot your request. I am
“ obliged to you for reminding me :
“ we should have lost an infinity of
“ pleasure by admitting other com-
“ pany.” This she said, but not from her heart : however, the smile, the
playful,



playful, yet self-reproaching, action entirely subdued Sir Harry's displeasure. Such charms has even the semblance of good humour and ingenuousness; and the rest of the evening passed away in conversation on the part of Sir Harry and his guests, affectionate, lively, pleasant, and profitable.

CHAP. VII.

WHEN they were alone, Matilda remarked that Conway appeared thoughtful; and, she was not at a loss in guessing the subject of his reflections. The truth is, Conway experienced, at that moment, that sensation of pain which a delicate mind feels, to acknowledge, even to itself, that the judgement or conduct of a beloved friend has been erroneous: and, though he much wished to relieve his mind by conversing with Matilda, he could scarcely bring himself to confess, even to this second self, that he thought with a degree of contempt of the woman his friend had made choice of—and, Matilda guessing
by

by her own thoughts, and his silence, what was passing in his mind, avoided mentioning Lady Gaythorne. At last, however, he said, "Tell me, Matilda, what you think of Lady Gaythorne. I know you will give me your true sentiments, for I have ever found you superior to that little weakness which hangs about many good women, who, fearing the imputation of a tendency to detraction, run into a contrary extreme; and, by speaking well of all, forfeit justly their claim to the praise of giving the palm to merit alone. — Truth thinks not of the opinion of others, but when called upon, boldly delivers its own." So, now, Matilda, I have furnished you with an unanswerable reason for speaking your real sentiments. — "I confess

" to

“ to you,” said Matilda, “ she is a very
“ different woman from what I always
“ thought would have been the choice
“ of Sir Harry Gaythorne ; and, that
“ she is one with whom I would never
“ form an intimate acquaintance.”

“ I should have known,” said Conway, “ that the chords of her heart
“ did not vibrate in unison with yours,
“ had I only heard her sing. She has
“ the advantage of a good voice, she
“ executes in a good stile, with neat-
“ ness, and even a degree of brilliancy,
“ but still there is a something want-
“ ing.”

“ There is wanting that expression,
“ which gives a soul to harmony itself,
“ and for which nothing can compen-

“ fate !”

" fate! When I understood that the
 " mother of Lady Gaythorne was
 " the widow of an English Officer of
 " a noble family, who had retired to
 " St. Omer's, in order to bring up her
 " daughter, and live in a superior
 " manner on her small income, than
 " she could in England, I had imagin-
 " ed my friend's wife a well-bred,
 " well-informed woman, unaccustomed
 " to the frivolous pursuits of dissipa-
 " tion, and untinctured by the flippant
 " airs that distinguish her followers.
 " My opinion of her mental qualities
 " had been regulated by my know-
 " ledge of Sir Harry's general good
 " taste, his superior understanding,
 " his worth, and elegance of senti-
 " ment. I begin, now, to give credit
 " to what Wilmot, who, you know,
 " visited

" visited them at St. Omers, said of
 " them, though at the time I attend-
 " ed not to his observations, knowing
 " that his strictures on the female part
 " of his acquaintance, are generally
 " more remarkable for sarcasm, than
 " candour and justice. But, I am of
 " opinion he spoke the truth when he
 " said, ' He had looked behind the
 " cards and perceived how the game
 " was likely to terminate.' He ob-
 " served that the mother and daughter
 " played into each other's hands; the
 " former was anxious to make it ap-
 " pear, that three men of superior
 " rank and fortune, who visited at the
 " house, were desirous of obtaining
 " the hand of her daughter: to these,
 " she paid the most assiduous attention,
 " whilst Sir Harry was present; taking
 " no

“ no more notice of him, than the
“ rules of politeness and hospitality
“ demanded. The daughter, on the
“ contrary, appeared totally insen-
“ sible to their attentions, (which,
“ in fact, were no more than every
“ man of gallantry thinks himself un-
“ der an indispensable necessity to pay
“ to a fine woman) whilst even a glance,
“ a smile of approbation, from Sir
“ Harry, seemed to give her extreme
“ satisfaction.—If she sung a plaintive
“ air, the tenderness it breathed was
“ all directed to him; and, if she
“ danced, she looked at no one but
“ him for admiration and applause.
“ These *seeming* indications of a passion,
“ to which he could not be blind,
“ joined to the conduct of her mother,
“ who acted the part of a woman, in-
“ vincibly

“vincibly determined to dispose of her
“child to the highest bidder; without
“consulting her inclination, flattered
“that degree of self love which every
“man possesses, and gave birth to a
“better sentiment, that of pity for
“her situation. He thought the attachment she displayed, disinterested;
“for, her mother’s artful conversation
“and deportment had persuaded him
“that she might match higher, if fortune was her only object. He wished her happiness, he was anxiously
“interested in what concerned her;
“from some motive or other he felt
“himself drawn to seek her society.—
“From these sensations, as he had
“never loved, he fancied that he now
“loved; he acted accordingly; he
“married.”—“And, I fear Wilmot’s
“words

“ words are already verified,” That
“ the seeds of frivolity which the con-
“ duct and lessons of her mother, had
“ so thickly sown in her bosom, when
“ warmed by the sunshine of prospe-
“ rity would soon spring up and over-
“ shadow for ever, the happiness of
“ our friend.”

Matilda only answered by a look, that expressed her pity for the disappointment of one whom her mind had pictured so amiable as it had Sir Harry; and the conversation, for that time ended.

CHAP. VIII.

THEY were at the Opera the next evening, and from thence went to Ranelagh. At their entrance, Lady Gaythorne immediately began to exert her voice in a way that perfectly astonished Mrs. Conway, who had, till then, heard only the languid tones of affected softness proceed from it; nor knew she how to account for the sudden change, till they approached the orchestra, when Lady Gaythorne, fearing they might, any of them, make a pause in their walk, said, "No body listens to
" the music this season," and quickened her pace. Matilda instantly perceived for what reason she had talked

so

so loudly, and so fast, namely, that of convincing every body near enough to be annoyed by her loudness, that she was not so unfashionable as to attend to the music.

In a few minutes, a buzzing sound was heard, which was occasioned by the entrance of the Prince of —! And, now, the countenance of every female matron, maiden, prude, or courtesan, was adjusted to the air considered most advantageous to the features of each.

The plumage of all expanded; or, (if the expression is deemed objectionable) was set in motion: a thousand graces were thrown into the movements of the heads and necks, and information anxiously sought from every glass pannel,

panel, concerning the general appearance of the figures that passed them. The free unembarrassed air of Lady Gaythorne, and the style of her dress, which solicited observation, arrested the eye of the Prince. For, though the real beauty, and animated intelligence of Mrs. Conway's countenance could not pass unnoticed, Lady Gaythorne soonest caught, and longest rivetted the attention of the votaries of fashion.

It would be difficult to describe the exultation Lady Gaythorne displayed at the general gaze; which the Prince's stopping to notice her, had much increased, and the triumph of her heart was unbounded, when in a few minutes after, Mr. Needham joined them, exclaiming, "The manners of this age
are

“ are without parallel, our young men
“ of fashion have so little regard to de-
“ cency that they do not scruple to
“ boast their profligate wishes respect-
“ ing women whose conduct gives them
“ no cause for hope. Colonel St.
“ Clare has just been swearing that Sir
“ Harry Gaythorne is the most uncon-
“ scionable being in the world, to think
“ of monopolizing so much elegance
“ and beauty. — The Prince, he says,
“ protests you are the most captivat-
“ ing woman he has seen to night.”

At this information, whether true or false, the eyes of Lady Gaythorne shot forth the glances of inflated vanity; she even obliged those of whom he had spoken, to corroborate what he had said, by looking at them whenever

they passed her, with that conscious air that demands particular observation. When they were to return home, Lady Gaythorne insisted upon Needham's supping with them.

During the remainder of the night, though she was in the pleasantest humour imaginable with every one else, she was in the worst humour in the world with Sir Harry.—Indeed, a close observer might perceive that she looked upon him as one who had done her an injury by putting a bound to her triumphs, and treated him with the most marked indifference.

That perfect perception of politeness and delicacy which belonged to Conway, kept him always from running
into

into the too common error of letting, when in company, the object of his particular affections engross a disproportionate share of his attention.—A conduct which generally disgusts, as it betrays a narrow soul, ever bent on gratifying its own propensities. We enter into society mutually to give and to receive the offices of courtesy; to enliven by the play of wit, to amuse by the observations of sentiment, or to instruct by the documents of experience. But, this cannot be done if our attempts to please be confined to one object; a mind, elegant and benevolent, revolts from the idea, and would sooner do violence to its own feelings, than wear the garb of selfishness. Yet, though Conway avoided offending others by particular marks of distinction, he never

wounded the heart he loved, by neglect.

His respectful attention to Matilda's sentiments, and his looks of approbation, always spoke her to be the object of his highest esteem and affectionate admiration. — A conduct so charmingly delicate and refined, would have insured him the respect of a woman of sense and feeling; but Lady Gaythorne saw it in another light — the rage of conquest glowed with such fury in her breast, that she thought it was not sufficient that no woman should be particularly distinguished in her company; but she deemed it as no more than justice to her charms, that they should all be treated with peculiar marks of neglect whenever she appeared. Of course,

the behaviour of Conway displeased her; it piqued her pride—and she strove to attract his particular notice, by every alluring wile she had learned in the school of gallantry to ensnare and captivate attention.

After supper, when she was requested to sing by Sir Harry, she obstinately refused; Needham and Mrs. Conway united their solicitations, yet with no more success: but the moment Conway uttered a request, she complied.—This little compliment pleased him, perhaps, more than he was conscious of himself, and made him perceive harmony and expression in her warbling he would not have discovered without it. She made him chuse the song, and whilst she sung it, she appeared to see no one

but him; and whether she really excelled herself, or that Conway was too much blinded by the charms of the finger to be a fastidious critic, we know not, but he seemed really to feel the pleasure he expressed, by a lively seizure of her hand, and an enthusiastic repetition of the word, charming!

Matilda was surprised and somewhat hurt; she had heard his sentiments the evening before, and she deemed they must have been altered by some powerful magic, or that Conway had been insincere enough to affect more pleasure than politeness demanded.

When they were alone, Matilda said to him, "You appeared much delight-

" ed

“ ed with Lady Gaythorne’s song.”—
 “ Yes,” replied Conway ; “ whether it
 “ is that she has more sensibility than
 “ we imagined, or that she accidental-
 “ ly hit upon the true expression of the
 “ song, as an unskilful finger, whilst
 “ touching carelessly the keys of an
 “ instrument, may chance to strike
 “ some note of harmony, I don’t pre-
 “ tend absolutely to determine ; but, I
 “ own I could not have believed she
 “ could have given so much pleasure
 “ to the mind.”

“ I should rather suppose it the effect
 “ of accident,” said Matilda ; “ for, I
 “ cannot believe she can have much
 “ real sensibility, or she could not show
 “ so cruel an indifference to Sir Harry,

“ whose tenderness of heart, and sweet-
“ nefs of manners, speak in his every
“ word and action.”

“ I am inclined to think,” returned
Conway, “ that our friend is not the
“ object of her choice ; but, rather
“ that of an artful mother. If so, as
“ those invisible bands are beyond hu-
“ man skill to form, which draw and
“ unite hearts, and our affections are
“ not in our own power, is not she more
“ to be pitied than blamed, all-accom-
“ plished and worthy of her heart, as
“ Sir Harry is, that she cannot love
“ him.”

“ Your sentiment is just ; but, why,
“ my dear Conway, should she not
“ show

“ show him the esteem, the respect
“ that is due to every amiable man
“ with whom she is acquainted ? female
“ delicacy, gratitude, a nice-sense of
“ honour, justice, every tie of duty
“ demands this.”

“ Alas !” said Conway, “ we argue
“ well upon situations in which we are
“ not called to act. A long course of
“ suffering of any kind, has, some-
“ times, the salutary effect of impro-
“ ving the heart, and giving a philo-
“ sophic turn to the mind, but the
“ first wounds of the heart generally
“ inflame, if they do not fester it;
“ and, when condemned to drag a
“ galling chain, it is not to be wonder-
“ ed at, if the mind sometimes loses

“ fight even of justice and of grati-
“ tude.”

“ True,” said Matilda, “ but I do
“ not think she has a soul capable
“ of true passion.—You first give her,
“ by the aid of imagination, your own
“ sort of mind, and then argue from
“ its operations. However, as it is
“ not in our power to make our
“ friend’s lot better by dwelling on
“ the subject, we will drop it if you
“ please.”

“ And, whilst we give a sigh to his
“ fate,” said Conway, “ let us thank
“ Providence who has made our lot so
“ different.”

“ Most

“Most truly, do I,” returned Matilda, with energy, every feeling of an affectionate heart revealing itself in the softened tone of her voice; “most truly do I.”

CHAP. IX.

THEY went the next morning to Mrs. Neville's; Needham met them there: Lady Gaythorne moved with rapidity from room to room; her criticisms were delivered at random, as if she claimed a right without having studied the art she spoke of, to give law to approbation. This is good;—that is bad;—I like this;—I can't bear that;—were her favourite expressions. In the article of drapery, she thought herself qualified to judge beyond any one in the gallery; and, indeed, every one gave her credit for her decision, when she pronounced that the bonnet in which Lady T—— was drawn, was fit only
for

for the head of a chambermaid. However, upon the whole, she liked the pictures so well, that she told Mrs. Neville she would sit with great pleasure to her pencil.—Mrs. Neville asked if her ladyship had fixed on any historical subject, or if she meant to be drawn simply as a portrait.

“Oh! an historical subject by all means,” said her ladyship. “We talked of a great many the other evening; did we not, Mr. Needham?—what was the last?—which was that I think we concluded would be the most proper.”

“Venus introducing Helen to Paris after his defeat;” said Needham.

“Oh!”

“ Oh, yes, so it was. Don’t you think,
“ Mrs. Neville, it will be quite the
“ thing ?”

“ Hah! extremely well chosen;—
“ and if your ladyship will do me the
“ honour to sit now, I wilt sketch in the
“ figures.”

“ But then you will want a Paris,”
exclaimed Needham.

“ Perhaps Sir Harry would be kind
“ enough to sit,” said Mrs. Neville.

“ O! Lard, Mrs. Neville, that will
“ be quite ridiculous.—Husband and
“ wife sitting looking at each other.—
“ Heavens! what a stupid picture of
“ Helen and Paris.”

“ Come

“Come, Mr. Conway, will you be
“the Paris then,” said Mr. Needham.
“Who that was thought worthy,”
returned he, “would refuse to be the
“Paris to such a Helen.”

This speech, though uttered in the
tone of common-place gallantry, hurt
Matilda; it recalled to her recollection
what had passed the night before, and she
trembled; for she had a mind, as the
reader may have observed, that loved
to indulge itself in philosophic reflec-
tions: and it was an observation of hers,
that the woman who had power, by
whatever means, to remove disgust, had
a greater chance to ensnare than she
who at first had attracted a slight degree
of admiration.

“I don’t

"I don't think that Mr. Conway's person is in the stile of Paris," said Matilda; perhaps hardly knowing what she said.

"Lord," cried Lady Gaythorne, "should it not be an elegant man?"

"Certainly, Madam," returned Mrs. Conway; "but your ladyship knows a man may be handsome, elegant, and young, and not have the character of beauty imagination assigns to Paris."

"Very true, Madam," replied Lady Gaythorne; but at the same time she looked at Conway with a sort of a half smile, half sneer, on her face, that said,

"Your

“Your wife will not let you;” and moved away.

We are sorry to confess that the sneer of such a being had power to mortify a man of Conway's excellent sense; though at the bottom, he certainly could not but be pleased with the proof this little display of Matilda's quick sensibility gave of the liveness of her attachment to himself. He thought it best, however, not to seem to enter into the sentiments of either of the ladies; but with that happy presence of mind which gives perfection to good breeding, he turned to Mrs. Neville, and said, gaily, “If the Goddess who is now to bring Helen and Paris together, like that of old, endow but the

“ the youthful warrior with her own
“ graces, he cannot fail to please.”

Mrs. Neville bowed, and proceeded to direct the attitudes in which she wished them to place themselves.

The air Lady Gaythorne assumed, though it had not that elegant voluptuousness which should have distinguished the fair Grecian, was sufficiently alluring ; for at that moment vanity was mining ten thousand right feelings in Conway's susceptible heart, and cast into his countenance an expression not widely distant from the ideal character he was to represent. Matilda felt a good deal of uneasiness, but she strove to examine the pictures, hoping, by that means, her chagrin would be hidden from

from others ; and gladly would she have concealed the cause of it even from herself. At last they departed from Mrs. Neville's, and after taking an airing, returned home to dine.—As soon as dinner was over Sir Harry left his friend to go to the House of Commons, an interesting debate being expected to come on.

Conway went immediately to the drawing-room to seek the ladies. He found only Lady Gaythorne there—Mrs. Conway having quitted her to write letters. She was sitting on a sofa, with a pair of diamond bracelets in her hand, which, on his entrance, she held to him, and asked him how he liked them ? saying, they were just sent from Grey's, and were the present of Sir Harry.—

“ Beautiful

“ Beautiful indeed !—How happy is
 “ Sir Harry to have it in his power to
 “ adorn with so much splendor the ob-
 “ ject of his choice,” said he, seating
 himself beside her ; and placing one of
 the bracelets on her arm, held her hand
 in his to look at it. At that instant, with
 an expression of *melancholy*, she exclaimed,
 “ What are jewels !”—The air
 with which this was said, confirmed Con-
 way in the idea that she had not follow-
 ed the bent of her own feelings in giving
 her hand to Sir Harry ; and the distinc-
 tion with which she had treated him, led
 him to think she would have preferred
 him. The co-operation of these thoughts
 produced sensations of pity and regard,
 that involuntarily led him to press the
 hand he had in his with a look of sym-
 pathy.—At that moment she threw into
her

her face the look she had practised for Helen, and endeavoured to disengage her hand. He no longer doubted that she had for him a peculiar regard ; and he instantly saw in that look a struggle between honour and the heart's affections.

She made a sort of feint to withdraw her hand—he still kept it ;—and fired by the rays she darted from her eyes, he drew it eagerly to his lips.—Just then the door opened and Mrs. Conway entered. Her respiration was for a moment suspended ; but she quickly recovered herself, and moved to a seat.—Conway was confused and changed colour ; but Lady Gaythorne, with perfect composure, said “ My dear Mrs. Conway, I want your opinion of these
“ bracelets.

“bracelets.—Do you know that Mr.
 “Conway has quite affronted me by not
 “admiring them;—and so he would
 “not be convinced that I forgave him
 “unless I permitted him to seal his par-
 “don on my hand.”

Matilda had by this time sufficiently recovered herself to reply without seeming to have bestowed a second thought on what she had seen—“Indeed they
 “are beautiful, and I should have
 “thought the taste and elegance of
 “the setting would have pleased him.”
 Matilda’s behaviour, contrasted so strongly with the ready but pitiful evasion of Lady Gaythorne, that Conway hated himself for having for a moment been dazzled by *her artful* allurements: but the efforts Matilda made to suppress
 4 the

the appearance of uneasiness, made it operate but the more strongly internally.

—When she reflected on what had passed in the morning, and added to it what she had now seen, her heart was agitated with the most painful fears.—She strove to join in the conversation, and to appear cheerful—but her endeavours to conceal, betrayed the state of her mind more than her silence, for she often abruptly dropped the subject she had started, or returned incoherent answers to what was addressed to her.—Conway, who marked her absence of mind, was much affected. “Good God!” said he to himself, “that a woman whom, though I cannot but pity on some accounts, on others I must despise, should have had power to cause me to give
“uneasiness

“uneasiness to one of the most amiable
 “creatures in the world.”

He waited with the anxiety of a lover
 for an opportunity to relieve the heart
 of Matilda, and to make his peace with
 her.

CHAP. X.

AS soon as Matilda had retired for the evening, she threw herself on a sofa in her dressing-room, and there began to re-contemplate all that had passed, and was so totally absorbed in these meditations, that Jenny, who stood ready with fillets to bind up those locks she had in the morning exhausted all her art to display, asked her twice if she should take off her head-dress without being heard. Her throat became convulsed, and in a moment tears streamed down her cheeks. Jenny, alarmed, ran instantly to the bell, but Matilda said, faintly to her, before she had reached it, "I shall be better

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H

"presently,

“presently, if you will give me a little
“water.”

She had a good deal recovered when Conway rapped at the door, and asked if he might be admitted? Matilda wiped her eyes, and cheered her countenance, in the hope he would not perceive she had been weeping. He said he had something to say, and bade Jenny leave the room. He instantly perceived that something had disordered her, and taking hold of her hand with the voice of tenderness, he said, “You have been
“ill—tell me what has disordered you.”

“I had a little hysteric, which soon
“went off;—I am quite well indeed!”

"No, Matilda," returned he—"no, you are not well—something has given you uneasiness.—If I have been the cause, scruple not to reproach me with it.—You know I am not averse to having my faults pointed out to me."

"I have said nothing to make you think you have been the cause of uneasiness, and if you had, you know I detest reproaches—they are too often apt to bring on severe words that frequently leave a sting behind harder to endure than the original cause of complaint."

"If you will not tell me, then, in what I have been wrong, tell me how

H 2

"you

“ you would wish me to act towards
“ you.”

“ Only to love me every moment of
“ your life, as I am sure I do you.”

“ Shall I tell you, then, my dear
“ girl, how I construe your expressions:
“ —you think there have been some
“ moments of my life in which I have
“ forgotten you : — perhaps you may
“ have drawn this conclusion from some
“ expression of mine, rather too lively,
“ or from some little levity of man-
“ ner.”

Matilda changed colour.

“ Confess, now, that it was so,”
said Conway.

“ I will

“ I will own,” said Matilda, “ I have
“ already wished we were gotten back
• “ to our old way of life in the coun-
“ try.”

“ You cannot, Matilda, have more
“ pleasure in the thought of returning,
“ than I have ; and, you know my mo-
“ tive for wishing to quit our home,
“ was not that of entering into the
“ amusements of a town life.”

“ Forgive me, Conway, I will no
“ longer harbourn a thought like dis-
“ trust : — I see you still possess that
“ towering virtue, sincerity, whose am-
“ ple shade can hide a thousand faults :
“ and did you cease to love me, I am
“ sure you would not seek to disguise

“ the change, by acting a continual
“ falsehood.”

“ Cease to love you? Good God!
“ can you doubt the existence of a
“ flame that has so long burnt steadily
“ though the fluttering of an insect had
“ power to obstruct the light of it for
“ a moment.”

“ But, we have often seen,” returned
Matilda, “ the fluttering of a small
“ insect extinguish a clear and lumi-
“ nous flame; and the torch of hymen
“ once extinguished can never be re-
“ newed.”

“ You continue, Matilda,” replied
Conway, “ to speak with so much so-
“ lemnity

“lemnity on the subject, that I shall
“think your distrust is fixed.”

“Oh, heavens! but, indeed it is
“not,” said she: “forgive all that is
“said; I blame my own folly more
“than you can do.”

He turned towards her at the sup-
plicating softness of her voice, and
holding her to him, “Thus,” said he,
“let us mutually seal each others for-
“giveness.”

Matilda gave a few tears to their re-
conciliation, breathing out, “We shall
“soon see our rural home, and our
“lovely children.”

“ I am sure,” said Conway, “ you
“ cannot have more pleasure in that
“ thought than I have ; I do not desire
“ a town life myself, and I see that it
“ does not suit with you. You have a
“ mind too highly wrought to relish
“ the glare of life, and like the soft
“ myrtle, flourish best in the shade.”

In a few days the Parliament was
adjourned ; and the town was emptying
apace : Conway now reminded Sir
Harry and Lady Gaythorne of their
promise ; and his request that they
would immediately put it in execution,
being warmly seconded by Mrs. Con-
way, was acceded to.

The singularity of Needham’s cha-
racter made Mr. Conway desire to have
more

more of his company, and as he was a constant visitor at Sir Harry's, and happened to be present when their departure was proposed, he gave him an invitation to go with them; which, though he had an invitation from a peer on his hands, he accepted with avidity, because it was the means of cementing a new acquaintance, and that was always to him a considerable acquisition.

When they arrived at——, and were driving through the little park that led to the mansion of Conway, they saw at the root of an old oak their children, with their laps full of the sweetest flowers of the Spring, some of which a female servant who attended them had formed into balls, which they

were throwing at one another; whilst she was fantastically adorning them with chaplets artlessly woven. — Matilda's eyes sparkled with pleasure at this sight. "There are the dear little things," she exclaimed.

Lady Gaythorne remarked the pleasure with which Conway seemed to observe this little ebullition of maternal affection. She had perceived that though he had at first been somewhat dazzled with her light and flippant gaiety—her levity of manner, by being too often repeated till novelty wore away, inspired him with reflection, and put him upon examining his feelings and guarding against their tendencies: this plan not having been successful,
Lady

Lady Gaythorne set about forming a net of different materials.

But to return.

Soon after they got into the house the children were brought in, and all present were struck with the notice Lady Gaythorne took of them; the good humoured manner in which she talked to, and endeavoured to amuse them, made Conway begin to resume his former opinion that she had naturally a good heart, which had been warped by a wrong education, and too early a commerce with the world.

Even Matilda was pleased with her behaviour, though she did not, perhaps, place it to so favourable an

account, but with a parent's partiality imputed it to the superior beauty and engaging manners of her little ones.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THE next day being Sunday, they went to church. Sir Harry remarked the clergyman as a man of respectable appearance, with a clear, unaffected delivery. Mr. Conway replied, that he was a man of a regular, inoffensive character, of a good understanding, and moderately learned. But, that he was much straitened in his circumstances having a large family, and but very slender preferment in the church.

Mr. Williams was the son of an innkeeper, who, finding he had a propensity to letters, bred him to the church;

church; but died soon after he had taken orders, and having several children, their portions, when the property of the father came to be divided, were very small. Young Williams not having those luminous talents, which in spite of all disadvantages sometimes recommend an obscure man to patronage, was forced to exist for a few years on a curacy of twenty pounds a year—but marrying a young woman who had served a lady of quality, through her interest he obtained a living of about a hundred and fifty pounds a year: upon this, burdened with a family of seven or eight children, they now live. Sir Harry said he had it not in his power himself to serve him, having promised the next presentation of a living in his gift to a gentleman whom he knew at college ;

college; but that he would speak to his friend, the Bishop of —, in his behalf. — Mr. Conway brought Mr. Williams home to dine with them, and Mrs. Conway sent to invite Mrs. Williams and the young ladies, to take their tea with them in the afternoon.

This woman was by no means a favourite with Mrs. Conway; but, she chose to pay her the attentions of a neighbour, out of respect to her husband's character and profession; and often made her presents, which the narrowness of Mr. Williams's income rendered very acceptable to her.

Mrs. Williams was illiterate, conceited, and vain to excess; however,
she

she had the art of concealing her disposition before those on whom she was dependent. — By studying the humour of the lady she served, entering into her caprices, flattering her beauty, and pretending to admire the most faulty parts of her person and character, she had lived several years in great favour in a family where luxury reigned, and œconomy was unknown. She was, of course, ill qualified to bring up a family with decency, on an income which required much œconomy in the management of it. Her children showed the symptoms of almost total neglect; when young, they were sickly, dirty, and fretful; and when grown up, proud, envious and ignorant. She was flatteringly at home, and tawdry abroad, for she still retained and indulged her passion
for

for finery;—and, on a Sunday at church, or when paying visits, she still exhibited the remains of her lady's cast wardrobe, mixed with such inferior additions as her present finances allowed her to make.—Too large a portion of the time of Mrs. Williams and her daughters was exhausted in preparations for visiting and receiving their acquaintance, to leave much for the necessary avocations which neatness and œconomy demand. Their society, which chiefly consisted of a few card-playing old ladies, of small fortunes, whose company was little coveted by either the young, the lively, or the rich; the family of the apothecary they employed, an attorney's wife, or two, and a few ladies whose husbands had just turned their counters into card-tables,

tables, and given their families an opportunity of creeping into the society of the fashionable circle of a country town.

They sometimes graced the card and dancing assemblies with their presence ; but there was generally some severe jest or other ran through the room, on the shabby decorations of the daughters, or the vulgarity of the mother, that sent them home vexed enough to put them in an ill-humour with every one they found there, without having the salutary effect of teaching them the useful lesson of concealing the narrowness of their circumstances, by retiring from public view to pursue less expensive amusements, and the sober employments of domestic life.

But,

But, though Mrs. Williams frequented the card-tables of some few ladies whose husbands had been in trade, with the hope of winning their money, she instilled into the minds of her daughters the most sovereign contempt for them; and even many of those whom she now visited, before their apostacy from shop-keeping, she had on many occasions reviled for daring to wear better clothes than herself.

I said, when she made her appearance at church she was always equipped in her best attire,—but this rarely happened except of an afternoon, for visiting and card-playing swallowed up so much of her time in the week days, that she usually spent the Sunday morning

ing in mending in a slovenly manner the cloaths of the family.

Mr. Williams would have rejoiced to have seen his family berter conducted; but he was restrained from expressing his wishes on that head, by the fear of calling forth his wife's eloquence, which, not unfrequently, broke forth in torrents that almost overwhelmed him—and upon a subject that would have been inexhaustible had they lived to a patriarchial age, which was her having procured for him the only living he held.

There was one thing, however, in which the good man was resolute; and that was in taking all his children to church with him, if not prevented by sickness;

sickness; but this laudable act of authority he could never carry into execution without frequent hints to hasten them. To these hints he commonly received such replies as, "Lord, papa, " I can't come yet, for I am drawing " up a hole in Ned's stocking: and " I," said another, " am putting a little ink upon Sukey's toe, to hide the " hole in her shoe:"—"and I," said a third, " am running up a rent in my " petticoat:"—"and for my part," said a fourth, " I know not that I can " go at all, for Sukey has used all my " pomatum, and my hair is not half " dressed." By this means they were seldom ready till too near the hour of appearing in church.—And often when they had sallied forth, it was a hundred chances to one, but some one of them

them discovered an aperture that necessitated the party to run back and get their mother to stitch up.—This caused Mr. Williams, at length, to make it a rule, before he passed over the threshold, to desire them to examine their clothes; and this circumstance being told rather ludicrously by one of their servants, it became a bye word in the parish :
“ Come, before we proceed farther let
“ us examine if there is any thing re-
“ mains to be sewed.”

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

MRS. Williams came to tea accompanied by her eldest daughter; a tall, yellow-complexioned young lady, with a look expressive of sarcastic impertinence: her dress was an old fashioned turmeric coloured silk gown, flowered with shades of red: her petticoat of white lustring, which had been scoured, was trimmed with a flounce of washed gauze, from below which a dirty green stuff petticoat made its appearance: her neck, the texture of which had not been rendered coarse by too frequent ablutions of water, was decorated by a soiled gauze handkerchief, under which her interior drapery was here and there discernable,

discernable, and which not being of the whitest hue, served like brown powder to heighten the lilies of her complexion.

Soon after they were seated, Mrs. Williams asked who that strange lady was who sat in farmer Markland's pew.

"Lard, papa, did not you know her?"
"Why it is his daughter from London,"
"Fanny Markland that was, and drawn
"forth at a prodigious rate I assure
"you."

"Why, what had she on, child?"
eagerly asked Mrs. Williams, with great
impatience.

"Why, mama, she had on as deli-
"cate a chintz gown as ever you, I sup-
"pose,

“pose, would wish to see ; and a large
“fashionable bonnet.”

“Upon my word,” replied the mo-
“ther, “a very fine lady : I declare it’s
“a shame : but farmers’ daughters now
“dress as fine a gentlewomen ; nay,
“one can’t distinguish them from real
“ladies.”

“Not perhaps, in public places,”
returned Mrs. Conway ; “but a real
“gentlewoman can be imitated by vul-
“gar people only in dress ; her conver-
“sation and deportment will always
“shew, that a liberal education, mani-
“fested in her superior complacence and
“elegance of manners, forms such an
“essential difference, as no dress, how-
“ever æconomical, can hide ; and for

"the want of which no dress, however
"rich and studied, can compensate."

"You are perfectly right, Madam,"
said Miss Anne; "I dare say she is a
"vulgar creature when you come to
"talk with her."

"Indeed, Anne, she did not look so,"
said Mrs. Williams.

"What person is it you speak of,
"Miss Williams?" said Mrs. Conway.

"Why, Madam," replied she, "it is
"the daughter of a farmer whom Lady
"Witlington took a fancy to, from be-
"ing shewn some of her drawings when
"she was a school girl, and her ladyship
"took her to live with her; but to be
"sure,

“sure, you know she could be nothing
“but a servant, Sir,” turning to Need-
“ham, who sat next to her.

“No, Madam,” replied he, very sen-
tentially, “indeed, I do not know.”

Miss Anne was a little disconcerted,
but soon resumed her conversation—
“And so, Madam, as I have been told,
“she is married, and gets her living by
“painting.”

“Perhaps,” said Mrs. Williams, with
the quick respiration of envious alarm,
“perhaps, though she may get a great
“deal of money; for I remember when
“I lived as companion to Lady D—, —,
“her ladyship had her picture drawn,
“and it cost a vast deal of money, and

“ all the great people took notice of the
“ painter.”

“ Oh, Yes,” cried Miss Williams ;
“ but that must have been a capital
“ hand, not such an insignificant crea-
“ ture as Mrs. Neville.”

“ Very true, child,” said Mrs. Wil-
liams, her anxiety a little composed ; “ I
“ dare say, nobody takes any notice of
“ her.”

“ Oh ! no, mama, I dare say not :
“ you know one hears the names of all
“ the great painters mentioned in the
“ public prints ; but one never hears of
“ Mrs. Neville, as a person of great
“ abilities, you know, Sir.”

“ Yes,

"Yes, Madam," replied Needham, "the name of Mrs. Neville is often mentioned with respect; though her fame, which began among the higher class of people, has not yet descended to the vulgar.

"Mrs. Neville is the lady who is to paint your ladyship's picture, is she not," said Mrs. Conway, turning to Lady Gaythorne.

"Yes," said Lady Gaythorne, "I believe she is; but I don't perfectly recollect—Is she the same person, Mr. Needham?"

"There is but one lady who paints of that name," he replied.

“Upon my word,” said Mrs. Conway, “when I saw her at Lady Gaythorne’s, and afterwards at her own house, I thought her a very pleasing woman, and one who had conversed with, and acquired the manners of the best company.”

The Williams seemed thunder struck, and their wonder was heightened when Lady Gaythorne, who had a wish to convince even the family of a little country clergyman, that she never condescended to notice persons whom “nobody knows,” now exerted herself sufficiently to say, “The first time Lady Witlington introduced her to me, was at Lady Bell Gray’s assembly.”

The

The Williams could now scarcely breathe, so much were they astonished.

“Well, indeed, ’tis amazing,” said Miss Williams; “why, do you know her father is only a very middling farmer—but some people have such luck—”

“Luck, indeed,” cried Mrs. Williams: “why now, my daughter, I do assure you, you went to the very self-same boarding-school as she did, and was there, indeed, as much as a year, or more, longer than this girl; and learnt drawing of the self-same identical master, and was exceedingly apt and clever too; and you see why she had not luck to meet with any one to notice her. Well, people may

“very well say it is better to be born
“fortunate than rich.”

“I wonder none of our family ob-
“served her at church;—I wish I had
“seen her,” said Mrs. Conway.

“In your pew, Madam,” said Mrs.
Williams, “you could not see her; and
“in going from church, I remarked
“that she walked immediately home
“with her father, without staying to
“speak to any body.”

“I protest,” exclaimed Needham,
who sat on a stool in the window, “I
“do believe that the lady who is now
passing the gate is Mrs. Neville!”

“It

"It is, I really think," said Mrs. Conway;—"I wish she would call here. If we were to walk round, and go out at the little door in the park walk, we should meet her, and we might then invite her in."

"The shower that has fallen has made the grass wet—and I think it would be very improper for you to walk," said Conway.

"Do you think so?" said Mrs. Conway.

"Oh dear—I wish we could go," said Lady Gaythorne, with an earnestness which, whether real or affected, pleased Conway.

"Upon my word, I would not have
"you venture, ladies," said Conway;—
"but if Mr. Needham pleases, we will
"go; and as he is an old acquaintance,
"perhaps we may both together prevail
"upon her to overlook the etiquette of
"your going to pay her the first visit,
"and to favour us with her company
"for an hour or two."

"Go then, directly," said Mrs. Conway, and immediately they snatched up their hats, and set out. They presently returned with Mrs. Neville. The moment they came into the house, Mrs. Conway rose from her seat, and, quick as thought, opened the door of the room in which they were sitting, and held it till Conway introduced Mrs. Neville; when taking her hand with a low
curtsey,

curtsey, she said, "This is extremely
"kind," and led her to the top of the
room. The respect with which Mrs.
Conway treated her visitor, and the po-
lite ease with which she received these
marks of attention, convinced the Wil-
liams that they were not new to her,
and inspired the most pungent heart-
burning. The conversation turned on
the fine arts and polite literature. Con-
way shewed Mrs. Neville, and asked her
opinion of a little collection of pictures
he had made from some of the best mas-
ters, ancient and modern. But this con-
versation was soon interrupted; and by
the address of Lady Gaythorne, the di-
versions of the town became the topic,
in which Mrs. Neville bore no inconfi-
derable part, to the great mortification
of Mrs. Williams and her daughter,

who were constrained by dire necessity to be totally silent :—so that, unable to bear the scene any longer, Mrs. Williams soon took her leave, impatient to have an opportunity of unburthening her mind to her daughter. Mrs. Neville staid after them, and partook of a little supper ;—the conversation held, at it was seasoned by the salt of attic wit, and elegant pleasantry.

With all that Mrs. Neville said, Lady Gaythorne had the address to seem pleased, and treated her with so much attention and respect, that Conway was charmed with the proof, as he thought, this gave of a mind naturally liberal ; and he could not help exclaiming when they were alone, to Mrs. Conway, “ How invaluable a blessing is a just
“ education,

"education, and how liable are the best-
 "disposed minds to be warped by a bad
 "one!"

The next morning, when they walk-
 ed out, Conway walked with Lady Gay-
 thorne; and Mr. Conway, who
 had been before with Mrs. Conway,
 "Is Mrs. Conway ill?" said Lady Gay-
 thorne. "She looks quite indisposed to-
 day."

"She is usually a home-sick of her chil-
 dren," said Lady Gaythorne.

"Is she?" replied Lady Gaythorne.
 "P. A. H. C."

"Indeed!" said Lady Gaythorne.
 "Oh"

CHAP. XIII.

THE next morning, when they walked out, Conway walked with Lady Gaythorne ; and Needham and Sir Harry strolled on before with Mrs. Conway. — “ Is Mrs. Conway ill ? ” said Lady Gaythorne ; “ she looks quite indisposed to-day.”

“ She is uneasy about one of her children.”

“ Is she ? ” replied Lady Gaythorne : — “ I wonder she did not mention it at breakfast ! ”

“ Oh

“ Oh no,” said he, “ Matilda is of
 “ all human beings the least inclined to
 “ let others partake of her troubles ;—
 “ though at all times ready to commu-
 “ nicate her comforts and her joys.”

“ You give her a charming charac-
 “ ter :”—“ Indeed she is deserving of
 “ it,” he returned.

“ Oh, I have no doubt of it,” cried
 she ; “ for Sir Harry told me you mar-
 “ ried for love ;—and in that case, I
 “ suppose, if she had but few merits,
 “ your imagination would supply them ;
 “ —at least, if the same partiality con-
 “ tinues after marriage,—which I should
 “ like to know from one who had really
 “ felt what is called a romantic passion.”

This

This frank, though indirect avowal, of her not having married under the influence of an affectionate attachment, struck Conway for some moments silent. He felt for the fate of his friend—he felt there was an indelicacy in her confession; but in another moment he found himself inclined to excuse, rather than blame her; and to look upon it as the unguarded ebullition of a too incautious heart, by reflecting on the manners of the country in which she had resided, and the sentiments in which she had been educated. He remained absorbed in thought, till she reiterated with an appearance of frankness and simplicity that interested him.

“ I should like to have the question answered

answered by one who had really experienced a true passion."

"A true passion, madam," replied Conway, who began to recover a more disengaged manner, "never departs from the heart, though after interrupted possession of the object, it takes a new, but not less pleasing form.—Nor is it difficult to account for the change. Before marriage, the lover, even if he be an acknowledged one, has, comparatively, few opportunities of enjoying the society of his mistress. In those short moments he has a thousand fears to relate on his own part—a thousand doubts to clear up on her's; and scarcely has he felt the tear of reconciliation, or the pressure of endearment, before the moment

"ment of separation arrives, and he
 "goes away at last, reproaching his too
 "treacherous memory with having for-
 "gotten a thousand things he had to say.
 "Thus grief, joy, hope, despair, per-
 "plexity and delight, alternately sway
 "his breast, and keep it in continual tu-
 "mult. Possession calms this perturba-
 "tion, and inspires an affection that fills
 "without agitating the soul;—its rap-
 "tures are less tumultuous, because its
 "anxieties are fewer :—yet, let but an
 "incident occur to place in a new or
 "stronger light some virtue, grace or
 "accomplishment of the object of his
 "affections ; let sickness or calamity me-
 "nace the loss of her, and wedded love
 "instantly proves its energy by kindling
 "to transport, or sinking to despair."

“ On ★

“On my word,” said Lady Gaythorne, “you made an exquisite description.—How much must they lose who never knew the charms of such a state!”

There was a something in her manner of saying this which, as it had the appearance of real sensibility, melted the heart of Conway. “To change the subject,” cried he, “Do you see that farm house which stands so pleasantly on that hill before us?—It is the house where Mrs. Neville’s father lives.”

“Let us go and return her visit,” said she. Conway was pleased with her proposal, and stepping to Mrs. Conway, he said “Lady Gaythorne wishes us to lengthen

“lengthen our walk, and call upon
“Mrs. Neville.

“But I am fearful,” said Lady Gaythorne, “that it will fatigue Mrs. Conway, as she seems not well.”

“Oh, not at all :—I shall be very
“happy to return her visit.”

When they arrived at the gate of the fold yard of the farm, they were met by a venerable looking man of about sixty, with the implements of husbandry upon his shoulder, and whose athletic frame and healthful countenance spoke the temperance and activity of his life.— They inquired if Mr. Neville was at home. Parental joy animated his open aspect, and with a bend of his body
that

that had in it the graceful simplicity of patriarchal times, he thanked them for the honour they did him, and offered to conduct them to the house. In their approach to the house, Mrs. Markland came forth to meet them.—She was a fair and comely woman, of an age suitable to that of the farmer; and, like her husband, had that primitive plainness of deportment, which, even to those who have seen the manners of courts, conveys an idea of dignity, because composed, recollected, and unembarrassed:—their civilities were not a barbarous mixture of rustic ignorance and an affectation of the factitious mode of behaviour of people in higher life, but the simple manners of their ancestors, in which they had been bred, and which custom had rendered natural to them.

Mrs.

Mrs. Markland bid a servant tell Mrs. Neville that Mr. and Mrs. Conway were come to see her, and conducted her guests into a large old-fashioned parlour, whose floor and furniture had the polish of domestic neatness.

They said something to the good respectable matron in praise of her daughter.

“You honour her much,” she returned.—“She has been a great deal in the world; and it is long, very long, since I saw her, till she came down this summer to us.—We find her still humble, and kind, and dutiful, as when she first left us; but she is not the same in other respects;—her health, her spirits are gone! My
“girl,

" girl, when she left us, was like the
 " gayest bird that flies :—I am afraid,
 " but I dare not ask her questions, for
 " she always shifts the subject.—I am
 " afraid she has not the best husband ;—
 " but she never complains ; she has not
 " a heart that will bear much unkind-
 " nefs,—her constitution is already bro-
 " ken ; and I fear her heart will soon
 " follow. Lady Wittington, to be sure,
 " has frequently written to us to tell us
 " how happily our daughter was settled,
 " and to express her pleasure at it :—
 " but alas ! our child says nothing, but
 " that she is content. Perhaps you may
 " know him, madam," said she to Mrs.
 Conway, " and can tell us how he be-
 " haves, for we have never seen him ;—
 " we may, perhaps, do him an injustice
 " —but we have heard that men in the
 " gay

“ gay world act in a manner, and think
“ nothing of it, that would break my
“ poor girl’s heart. Why did we ever
“ part with her !—but we thought it
“ was for the best.—I know she is not
“ happy, for the other day she plucked
“ a large bunch of cypress, and placed
“ two or three of the smallest rose buds
“ she could find in the midst of it ;—she
“ sighed, and said it was emblematic of
“ her life. I did not understand her at
“ the time, but afterwards, when we
“ were looking at her paintings, she
“ told us that cypress signified *mourning*,
“ and roses *pleasure* ; and *small* were the
“ buds that she placed among the cy-
“ press she wore in her bosom.”

The company avoided giving the
good woman pain, by saying they had
not

not long had the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Neville, and were not intimate enough to have seen any thing of her domestic situation. The conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Mrs. Neville, who entered with that quiet ease which distinguished her deportment. She expressed her pleasure at seeing them, and then they entered into an agreeable conversation.

Lady Gaythorne seemed delighted with the situation of the house, and drawing a chair opposite to a window that commanded a beautiful prospect of a romantic country, with the Avon stealing along at the bottom of the hill on which the house stood; "I could live here for ever," said she, affecting a tone of enthusiasm.

Needham smiled, and leaning over the back of her chair, "I remember," said he, "Sterne somewhere says, that the expression *the world*, frequently means only the little circle in which a man moves, and is as often used (when he speaks of the observations made on his actions) by him who never goes beyond the smoke of his own little village, as by him whose deeds or whose talents have extended his fame to distant climes. In my opinion the expression *for ever* is often as ridiculously applied. The coxcomb, who having received an encouraging billet from his mistress, protests he will pre-serve it *for ever*;—means, till it is worn out by being constantly carried in his pocket, and boastfully shewn to every one he meets. When a notable

madly M 21 .I. " lady

“ lady says she has bought a gown that
 “ will last *for ever*, she only means the
 “ term of a few months : and when a
 “ town lady declares she could look at
 “ a prospect for ever, she means, I
 “ should presume, for *ten minutes*.

“ We shall be able to judge of your
 “ ladyship’s idea of *for ever*, when we
 “ have the pleasure of paying Mrs. Ne-
 “ ville an afternoon visit,” cried Mrs.
 “ Conway.” Mrs. Neville bowed and
 said, she hoped they would do her that
 honour very soon.”

“ Oh, I should like better than any
 “ thing in the world, to come here this
 “ evening,” returned Lady Gaythorne :
 “ —are you otherwise engaged, Mrs.
 “ Neville ?

Mrs. Neville assured her ladyship she was disengaged, and should rejoice in the honour of seeing them. It was then agreed that they should take their tea at Mr. Markland's.

“ We can then,” said Mr. Conway,
“ shew to Sir Harry and Lady Gay-
“ thorne a spot at the distance of two or
“ three fields from this house, worthy
“ of observation, as being the birth-
“ place of the inimitable Butler, author
“ of Hudibras. Stratford has been
“ eternized for giving birth to Shake-
“ speare ; and, had I a pen that could
“ give immortality, the little village of
“ Strensham should live for ever.

“ Is there any thing curious in the
“ house itself ?” asked Lady Gaythorne.

“ Nothing

“ Nothing at all,” replied Mrs. Neville, “ it is a low-roofed, thatched cottage, which was the property of Butler’s father :—a piece of ground that belongs to it is still called Butler’s Close. I visited the little dwelling this morning, for the first time since my childhood), with a high degree of enthusiastic pleasure. A poor cottager lives in one part of it ; the other is uninhabited, and quite out of repair. The largest room is a tolerable sized kitchen. *Here*, (thought I, as I stood beside the fire place, looking at some old brick-work, which sufficiently spoke the antiquity of the building) *Here* sat, after the labours of a toilsome day, the respectable yeoman ;—*there* the contented companion of his industry. Imagination instantly paint-

“ ed a groupe of happy faces in each
“ of the wide-extended, social chimney
“ corners: the principal figure stands
“ forward with a boldness of relief that
“ rivets attention ; not distinguished by
“ outward garb, or high-bred graces :
“ but by the flexible features of genuine
“ humour, and the sparkling glances of
“ pointed wit. The moral tale goes
“ round ; the ‘ crackling faggot blazes
“ on the chearful hearth.’ I listen to
“ the arch commentaries of the youthful
“ satirist on the little transactions of the
“ village ; the comic allusions that fall
“ from him in language, quaint, yet
“ picturesque ! I see the ludicrous, the
“ vivid images his sportive fancy raises !
“ and I feel the little dome shake with
“ the unrestrained burst of rustic laugh-
“ ter ! A pensive traveller, who has
“ forsaken

“ forsaken the spot where he gave to the
“ tomb the remains of a beloved part-
“ ner, and is rambling to dissipate a
“ gloom bordering upon despair, ap-
“ proaches.—He feels, for the first time
“ since that sad event, his heart accord
“ to the tones of hilarity ; and by an
“ involuntary motion checks the reins
“ of his horse : he is dubious of the
“ road he ought to take, in order to
“ reach a place of abode for the night.
“ He dismounts to make inquiries,—
“ and whilst he fastens his horse to the
“ little wicket in the hedge which
“ fences the cottage from the high road
“ experiences a pleasure long unknown
“ to his breast, in the thought of look-
“ ing in upon a groupe of joyous coun-
“ tenances. I don’t know how far I
“ should have pursued the idea, had not

“ a little girl I had with me, who, poor
“ child, saw nothing but a fireless
“ hearth, an unpaved floor, and bare
“ walls, by asking me how much longer
“ I meant to continue in that dirty
“ place, awaked me from my reverie.”

“ Oh, I shall like to go extremely ;
“ but I am afraid I shall see no such vi-
“ sions,” cried Lady Gaythorne. They
soon after took their leave and departed.

In returning they were overtaken by
a shower of rain, as they were crossing
a wide field ; and in order to shelter
themselves, ran into a little shed, built
for the herdsmen to retreat to in bad
weather. Here they had not long been
before Mrs. Williams and her two
daughters came up : the gentlemen in-
stantly

stantly surrendered their places to them,
and endured the beating of the storm
under a hedge.

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CHAP.

C H A P. XIV.

WHILST the Williams stood here, they heard, to their infinite mortification, that the family from Conway park had been visiting Mrs. Neville. As soon as the storm was over they took leave, and pursued their different walks : but the pride of Miss Williams had received a deep wound, and she said to her mother as they returned home ; “ I am astonished the creature could have the effrontery to invite such a person as Lady Gaythorne to drink tea at a farm house—but some people’s assurance carries all before it ; for people that are polite, can’t tell how to refuse their bold requests.—Mama,

“ I think

"I think after this, you cannot scruple
"to invite them to your house."

"Why, truly Anne," said she, "if
"farmer Markland can take the liberty
"of asking Sir Harry and Lady Gay-
"thorne, to drink tea with them, I
"think we may: and I am sure Mrs.
"Conway would far prefer visiting us."

"Yes, indeed, mama, I think we may;
"but now we know they have visited
"her, it will look as if we imitated her,
"to ask them to drink tea: I should
"like for them to dine with us:
"that would shew we are of more con-
"sequence.—To be able to give a din-
"ner to Sir Harry and Lady Gaythorne,
"would give us quite an eclat."

“ Lord ! child,” replied the mother,
“ but great people have every thing in
“ such a stile, that we shall look quite
“ shabby and mean.”

“ Oh, never fear, mama : Colonel
“ Morgan’s housekeeper will lend us any
“ thing we may want to set off the ta-
“ ble ; and we can have John Mason’s
“ son to wait ; and that little green coat
“ of Jack’s (which is laid by because
“ he has out grown it) will do for Nick
“ Mason to wear for the day very well ;
“ and I can find a bit of red cloth some-
“ where in the house to tack on for a
“ collar and cuffs ; and with the red
“ waistcoat he has got of his own, we
“ can make him look very spruce.”

“ Lord

“Lord ! child, but he is such a queer-looking lank-haired numps.”

The motion of Miss Anne was received with approbation ; and it was agreed nem. con. to send an invation that very evening. A messenger was immediately dispatched to the next town to purchase some dinner cards : in the interval, Miss Anne busied herself in facing the little green coat : and having no red thread in the house, she made use of some blue, which, if it did not add to the neatness of the garment, certainly contributed to make that variety, which is allowed to be the soul of ornament. By the time the boy returned, the coat was ready for him to put on, in which he was ordered immediately to equip himself, and not to forget

get to shake the flour-box over his head. Mean while Miss Anne adorned his hat with a yellow button, and a bit of tarnished gold lace; which having performed, she sat down, and after spoiling several cards, at last completed one, and sent Nicholas with it, ordering him to return with all possible expedition, as no time was to be lost in making the necessary preparations.

The door of Mr. Conway's house was opened by Sir Harry's French valet, who much diverted with the figure of the boy, could hardly take the card from him without laughing; but, checking his risibility whilst he surveyed the marks of some fullers earth, which had been rubbed upon the coat, in order to discharge

charge the greafe, and which had not fufficiently dried to be brushed off clean.

“ Ah ! monfieur, faid he, you have
 “ had un little tomber in de dirt—
 “ come you wid me.”

So faying he carried him to the reft of the fervants, who no fooner faw poor little Nick Mafon fo metamorphofed, than they burft into an univerfal laugh: not being able to ftand this, the boy took to his heels and ran off.

The moment the family at the parfonage fet their eyes upon him, they cried as with one voice, “ Where is the
 “ card ?”

“ I have

“ I have brought no card,” replied Nick ; “ they were not at home, so I “ know not whether they will come or “ not ; but however, this I know, if “ they laugh as mainly at poor folks “ when they be dressed up a bit as their “ servants do, their room is better than “ their company.”

The Williams were astonished, and somewhat disconcerted at the expressions of the boy ; in which state we request to leave them for the present, and return to the Conways and their visitors.

CHAP.

CHAP XV.

" I DON'T know when I have made
" a more agreeable visit," said Mrs.
Conway, as the little party seated them-
selves after returning from Mr. Mark-
land's, " the pleasing conversation of
" Mrs. Neville, the interestingness of
" her appearance in a straw hat and
" linen gown, the unaffected simplicity
" with which we were entertained by
" the good old people, the cleanly
" looks of the rosy servant who waited
" at tea and served us with the delicate
" fruits and cream, the order and
" cleanliness of every thing in the
" house, and the quietness and regula-
" rity with which every one seemed
" to

“ to be following their avocations as
 “ we walked through the simple dwell-
 “ ling, gave a picture of respectable
 “ industry that inspired the most pleasing
 “ sensations,”

“ Oh, I was charmed,” drawled out
 lady Gaythorne in an affected tone,
 “ there was something in the whole
 “ extremely nouvelle.”

“ And, did you really enjoy it, Char-
 “ lotte,” said Sir Harry.

“ Oh, intirely,” said she.

“ What cards are these,” said Mrs.
 Conway chancing to cast her eyes on
 the chimneypiece: — “ From Mrs.
 “ Williams:—Will it be agreeable to
 “ your

“ your ladyship to accept the invitation ?”

“ Oh, by all means,” said she. And Mrs. Conway immediately dispatched an answer, which communicated no small delight to the Williams’s family, — who had been on the rack of anxiety to know how their invitation would be received.

When the hour of visiting arrived, in spite of the previous commands and menaces of their mother, the five younger children of the Williams could not help popping their heads out of the upper windows, like pigeons peeping from their holes.

The

The dress of Lady Gaythorne, which rose to the extreme point of the fashion, struck a kind of awe into the two elder daughters, who, with their mother, were ready to receive them. Little conversation passed before dinner, for Miss Anne and her sister were so overpowered by the glitter of Lady Gaythorne's appearance that she could not become collected enough, for some time, to start any subject, or to join in any one that was begun ; and Mrs. Williams, on her part, was incessantly making excursions to the kitchen to give directions concerning, and to inspect the cookery that was going forward. Her husband endeavoured to supply her place, but he gave them pain by the anxiety which they plainly perceived in his countenance left his family

family should render themselves ridiculous by ill-conducting the entertainment. The boy, at last, appeared with the first dish, the wildness of his eyes, his trepidation, his shabby livery, and awkward gait, were so truly ludicrous, that their visitors could hardly refrain from laughing. The dinner consisted of unnecessary variety of provisions, very ill-dressed, and from the want of attendants, and the scarcity of utensils, very ill-served up. The poor lad, in his hurry to give Lady Gaythorne a glass of wine, spilled it on her apron ; but as she did not seem to feel any concern at the accident, Mrs. Williams bore it with christian meekness, giving him but a short reprimand ; which, considering she excelled more in the flowery and diffuse style of eloquence, than in the laconic,

was

was rather surprizing;—but, upon his letting half a dozen beautiful china plates fall out of his hands, she was mistress of no such forbearance, for this accident touched her nearly ; they were all of them borrowed, and she must of necessity replace them at a considerable expence. Mr. Williams, and Miss Anne in vain begged her to be calm : her choler was roused, and she could not refrain from venting it upon the poor trembling boy ; who heartily wished himself out of his green jacket and quietly following the plough. When the torrent would have ceased we know not, had not a sudden outcry like that of children whom some accident had befallen (and which seemed to proceed from an out-house) alarmed them. Sir Harry, who sat next the window,

window, which was but a short step from the ground, popped out and opened the door of the place from whence the sound had issued; and displayed to the company, who had by this time gone forth much terrified, the cause of the terrible howling they had heard, which was, two or three of Mrs. Williams's children, who had been locked up there, one of whom in trying to get out, had bruised his fingers with the door; this afforded a new subject for the eloquence of Mrs. Williams, who called instantly for the cook (as she styled the woman whom they had called in to assist them in dressing the victuals) and the other maid. Only the cook appeared, however, of whom she demanded who had locked up the children in that strange place; and why they

they had not been left in the nursery with the rest?

“ Lord bless your heart, Madam,” returned the woman, who, fired at the haughty manner in which Mrs. Williams interrogated, “ why, what could I do? Deuce a bit would they stay in the chamber along with the big ones, for they makes it a rule always to plague the little ones; and there they were under my feet or in the dripping pan every minute. — So I took and put them in there out of the way.”

“ But, Dolly ought to have minded them, mama,” said Miss Williams, “ for what could she have to do, — when

“when we have a footboy to wait at
“table.”

“Lord keep you, Miss,” replied the
woman, “the poor girl has had enough
“to do, what with running here and
“there, and having the children bawl-
“ing and squalling about her ears ;
“and it’s as much as ever she can do
“to keep ’em out of the parlour.”

Miss Anne, who stood upon thorns,
and was in the most terrible state of
mortification, desired the woman to
take all the children into the nursery,
and tell Dolly to take care of them.

—“Why, Miss,” said the woman,
who was much irritated at the com-
manding and inconsiderate language of

Miss Anne, "I'll tell her so to do,"
"when she comes back; but she is"
"gone to try to borrow some plates,"
"in lieu of those Nick broke."

The company could not help pitying
the awkward situation of the William's,
who uttered a thousand apologies to
their guests for their having been so
disagreeably disturbed, and delivered
many invectives against servants, as
they returned to the parlour.

But scarcely had they reseated them-
selves at table, and Mrs. Williams put
her knife into a currant tart, before a
violent rumbling over head like the
noise of thunder, alarmed them all.—
Lady Gaythorne startled, fell back in
her seat, and seemed to faint. Whilst

Some were employed in recovering the fainting lady, others ran up stairs to the chamber from whence the noise came, which was used as a lumber room, and for the children to play in during wet weather, or when Mrs. Williams received company. Here they beheld five or six children wheeling an old broken little coach about the room.

The gentlemen turned the matter off with a laugh at the oddity of the accident; and Mrs. Conway, with the kindest tone of voice in the world, said she was delighted "the little creatures had not hurt themselves."

But not so spoke Lady Gaythorne, whose nerves were so totally deranged

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by

by the successive hurries they had undergone, that as soon as the cloth was removed, she begged them to excuse her leaving them, saying she was so ill as to be unable to stay longer, and requested Sir Harry to order the carriage. Mrs. Conway insisted, as she was so ill, to accompany her home.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

WHEN they came home Lady G— retired to her own apartment to compose herself; and Matilda amused herself with the children till the gentlemen returned. When they entered, Mrs. Conway told Sir Harry, that Lady Gaythorne was gone to endeavour to get a little sleep, and that she believed she was not stirring. He soon after went out of the room, as did Needham, when Matilda said to Mr. Conway, “I was quite
“distressed to be obliged to leave the
“Williams immediately after that ridiculous accident; for it must hurt
“poor Mrs. Williams extremely, to
“think the troublesomeness of her chil-

“dren drove her visitors away: but it
 “was impossible for me to avoid insist-
 “ing upon attending the sick lady
 “home;—for my part, I confess I
 “thought the scene had infinitely more
 “of the comic than the tragic in it.”

“People view things,” returned Con-
 way, “in different lights, according to
 “the various casts of their minds. I
 “declare, I really think it might take
 “the effect it apparently had on Lady
 “Gaythorne, upon almost any woman
 “who had no taste for humour, and
 “was unused to see occurrences of the
 “kind.”

“Well,” replied Matilda, “truth
 “obliges me to confess, I think her
 “terrors were wholly assumed; but,
 “admitting

“admitting them to be real, ought she
 “not in politeness, in good nature, to
 “have endeavoured to have concealed
 “them from the parties concerned, who
 “she must perceive were in a very pi-
 “tiable situation?”

“Indeed, Matilda, I think you judge
 “the actions of Lady Gaythorne too
 “severely.”

“Good Heavens! Mr. Conway, I
 “could never have thought to have
 “heard you the defender of affectation.”

“Nor do you at present, Matilda,”
 replied Conway; “but supposing her
 “ladyship’s illness to be really assumed,
 “you are certainly too partial in your
 “strictures. Do not the foolish attempts

“of the Williams equally entitle them
 “to the reproach of ridiculous affecta-
 “tion, of what is entirely out of their
 “power to appear?”

“Yes; but my pity for their narrow
 “circumstances made me refrain from
 “commenting on their folly.”

“But then, should not your pity for
 “the wrong education of this young
 “woman have induced you to have
 “thrown the same kind veil over her
 “defects.

“There was a time,” said Matilda,
 “when you were of my opinion, and
 “when you thought that——”

“Yes,”

"Yes," interrupted he, "but that
"was before I had reflected on the dis-
"advantages she had laboured under;
"before I had seen several little turns in
"her mind, which, shining through
"the ravages of dissipation, have prov-
"ed to me that she has naturally an
"amiable heart."

"I have done, Conway," said Matilda,
"nor will I ever attempt to argue the
"matter further; for I see you do not
"wish to be convinced of what appears
"so me perfectly clear."

"I am astonished, Matilda," said Mr.
Conway; "I never before saw you so
"slow to be convinced of an error; nor
"so quick to see the faults of another."

“Nor do I ever recollect the time,” replied she, “when our opinions of any person were so different, so widely different; or when you were so inclined to put an unkind construction on my sentiments when in the flow of an open temper I gave them language to you, whom I consider as my second self.”

“Good God! you make the matter quite serious,” said Mr. Conway.

“You have, indeed, given me a wound,” replied Matilda; “and I have not dissimulation enough to hide it.”

So saying, the tears springing to her eyes, she walked hastily out of the room.

room. Conway would have endeavoured to have detained her, but as she quitted the parlour, Lady Gaythorne, who had been walking in the garden, passed by the window, and in a moment came in to the house, and entered to him immediately.

CHAP. XVII.

LADY Gaythorne had just parted from Needham, who had been inquiring with great anxiety if her ladyship was better.

“ I am better, Mr. Needham,” replied she, “ though not quite recovered
 “ —but for Heaven’s sake, did you get
 “ out of that house before part of it fell
 “ upon you ?—for I am sure I expected
 “ such an accident every moment to
 “ take place :—how can the people exist
 “ with such eternal riots about their
 “ ears ?”

“ We

"We got away by good fortune," replied he, "with unbroken bones;—but
"it called for all our fortitude to endure
"the disagreeable scene after your lady-
"ship went."

"Lord, Mr. Needham, what could I
"have done?"

Needham knew that there is nothing recommends us so much to a person bent upon any particular scheme, as judiciously insinuating that the end they wish for is likely to be obtained, and he instantly replied;

"I believe there were those in company who could not feel any thing disagreeable while your ladyship was present."

" 2

"I must

“ I must bow to you, Mr. Needham,
 “ for that compliment ; for I must con-
 “ clude you mean yourself : for Sir
 “ Harry, you know, has been married
 “ an age ; and Mr. Conway is still in
 “ love with his wife.”

“ Is he ?” said Needham, with a sig-
 nificant look.

“ Yes, indeed,” replied she, “ Sir
 “ Harry told me so ; and I am sure I
 “ think she is a pretty kind of a woman,
 “ and very amiable.”

“ Yes, but neither goodness nor beau-
 “ ty,” replied Needham, “ are load-
 “ stones able to fix the excentric affec-
 “ tions of men educated in such prin-
 “ ciples as are the youth of our days ;
 “ and

“and living amidst the seductive ex-
amples of a licentious age.”

He had time to add no more, for just then they were joined by Sir Harry; but he had said enough to give a ground for the imagination of Lady Gaythorne to paint upon, and to inflate her vanity.

On Sir Harry telling her the evening air was too cold for her to remain out of doors, she returned to the house, and entered it, as we have before related, just as Matilda quitted the parlour.

Conway approached, and with that soft air of politeness which was peculiar to himself, asked if she had intirely got the better of her hurry of spirits.

“Tolerbly

“Tolerably recovered, I thank you,”
 said she, throwing herself upon a seat ;
 “but was not that Mrs. Conway I saw
 “as I came in with her handkerchief
 “at her eyes ? Is she unwell, or any of
 “the family ? She has very weak spi-
 “rits, has she not ? for I very often see
 “her look melancholy.”

“Of late, I think she has,” replied
 Conway.

“I hope she has no particular reason,”
 said Lady Gaythorne.

“I think not,” said Conway ; “she is
 “an amiable creature ; but we are all of
 “us apt to be a little low spirited, and
 “to have imaginary ills sometimes.”

“I am

"I am sure," returned her ladyship,
 "it is impossible she can fancy any thing
 "to give her a moment's uneasiness re-
 "specting you; for I think of all the
 "people I have ever seen, you are the
 "most indulgent husband."—Conway
 bowed.

"Your ladyship does me too much
 "honour; I pretend not to a faultless
 "temper."

"Oh, then it was with you she was
 "displeased? Was it? Sure that must
 "be an imaginary grievance?"

"No, indeed; it is most probable I
 "was in the wrong."

"How

“ How generous is that—so then, I
“ find even you who marry for love have
“ disagreements sometimes—and is Mrs.
“ Conway equally liberal ? Would she
“ vindicate you, and blame her own
“ conduct to a third person, were she
“ led to say any thing on the subject ? ”

“ Yes, if on recollection she thought
“ she had been in the least degree to
“ blame, I think she would : of this
“ I am certain, she would never com-
“ plain of my conduct.”

“ Never complain ! ” reiterated Lady
Gaythorne ; “ Lord I think it is a great
“ relief to complain—I hardly think she
“ or any woman would deny herself the
“ relief of complaining, if she had an
“ idea

“idea the person to whom she spoke
“had understanding and prudence.”

“I do believe Matilda would so act,
“or she must have changed her nature.”

“Oh ! you are too nice ; for my part
“I think there is nothing in it. For
“instance, if one took it into one’s
“head one’s husband did not pay the
“same attention as usual, I don’t per-
“ceive there would be any thing wrong
“in mentioning it to a person whom I
“thought had a real friendship for me,
“and who had discretion, as we would
“mention any other little observation
“we make.—So Mr. Needham said to
“me but this minute in the garden : I
“happened to be speaking of you, and
“remarking how happy I thought you
“and

“and Mrs. Conway were in each other.
 “He observed, that there was no beau-
 “ty or merit, however great, that
 “would fix the inconstant heart of man
 “for ever; and that he did not believe
 “you were more proof against the
 “charms of novelty than another.”

“Did Needham say so?” cried he
 hastily; “from what motive could he be
 “led so to express himself. Matilda
 “could not have dropped to him any of
 “these little expressions of anxiety
 “which she has of late hinted to me—
 “It cannot be.

“Good Heavens! I’m sure I did not
 “say he told me Mrs. Conway said any
 “thing to him about the matter; it was
 “only his own observation.”

“I shall

"I shall inquire his reason for making it," said Conway.

"No, for Heaven-sake, don't—what a thoughtless creature I am; I dare say he only meant it as a general remark: I pray you, Mr. Conway, not to mention it to him; he may think I told it you with an ill-natured design of making mischief, and it was by one of the greatest chances in the world that I remembered it. Our talking on the subject brought it into my head."

She said this with an air of earnestness, and with that naivete which she knew well how to assume, and which was her most imposing artifice.

"I will

“ I will not speak of it,” he at length replied, “ as your ladyship so earnestly requests it ; —but I cannot think—Ma—
“ tilda—perhaps—but—well, however,
“ we will talk no more on the subject.”

“ Nor think any more of it, will
“ you ?” asked she, involuntarily, to appearance, laying her hand on his arm with an anxious vivacity, in the motion which was really graceful and insinuating. It is a fact, that we never show to so much advantage as in the presence of those whom we believe to have a prepossession in our favour, especially if to this consciousness is added the desire of pleasing : the heart is then dilated, the features are illumined by good humour, the whole figure is unembarrassed, and in readiness to assist by the charms

charms of graceful motion, the eloquence of the tongue.

“But is your ladyship,” said Conway,
“really of opinion that it would not be
“unkind to mention the little starts of
“humour, the caprices, of the being
“one loves above all others, to a third
“person?”

“Perhaps I should think as you do,
“had my lot been like yours.”

She said this with an appearance of melancholy and regret, that touched the prepossessed imagination of Conway; to whom she had often insinuated that her heart had given him the preference to any one else.

“Good

“Good God!” said he mentally,
“why was not such a heart fated to
“choose its counterpart!”

I know not whether it was the effect
of accident or penetration, that led Lady
Gaythorne to hit upon the right me-
thod of applying to the vulnerable part
of Conway's mind. The heart of Con-
way was one of the best in the world;
his understanding was of a very superior
order; and his judgement of books,
and the arts of design, shewed the fine-
ness of his taste. His person might
have served as a model for a statuary or
painter; but though his manners were
highly polished and full of delicacy,
there was a native dignity, and a grace-
ful simplicity in the latter, that preclu-
ded the most distant idea of effeminacy.

But

But as Pope observes, speaking of the difficulty of developing characters by external appearances,

“Unthought of frailties cheat us in the wife,”

Under all these manly graces, there was at bottom a weakness, which has been generally stiled womanish, but which is certainly by no means peculiar to either sex. Conway could not, possessing them so eminently, but be sensible of these gifts and accomplishments which so readily conciliated to him the affection of all with whom he conversed, and which particularly recommended him to the women. He was somewhat too conscious of them: a sensibility of heart that was ever alive to the soft and the beautiful, made him susceptible of too high a pleasure from the approbation



of the other sex ; and though his vanity on this subject had not led him into actions decidedly criminal, it had often influenced him to the commission of smaller errors, which on reflection he never thought of but with regret.

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